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ESPIONAGE®

MAGAZINE

December 1986

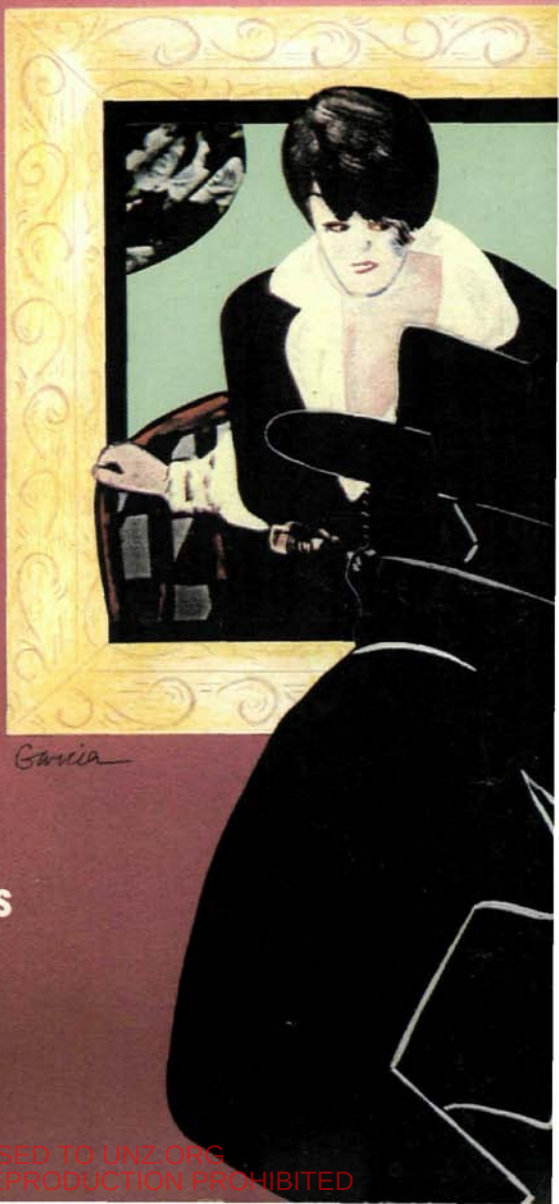
INTERVIEW—
Bruce Boxleitner
Scarecrow &
Mrs. King TV star

HOLY WAR
Frank Laffitte

WHO DARES TELL THE PRESIDENT?
Charles Naccarato

A SPY IS BORN
Gene KoKayKo

ERNEST VOLKMAN
CHUCK MEYER
BILL KNOX
MICHAEL W. MASTERS



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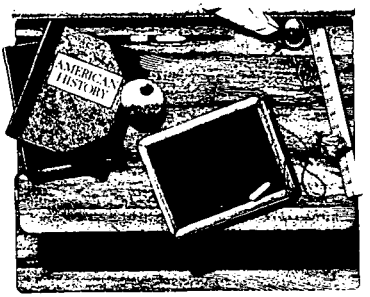
There are greater disadvantages to overcome in this country, but none more poignant nor disturbing. The plight of the American Indian is a harsh one, forced by an invading race onto reservations that were perfectly suited to destroying their culture and economy. Once a people loved and lived a land. What they love has been raped. What they have left is a farce.



Ever been to an Indian reservation? With few exceptions, they are as empty and depressing as an old Indian's eyes, masking the stories he heard from his grandfather with despair. The necessary transition forced onto the Indian culture has been very difficult. Nothing in their history helps them to "make it" in the culture and society of their conquerers. In fact, they have had to depend on the very people who robbed them of their land.

Undoubtedly, the best chance the Indians have is education. What they knew before is worthless to them now, in terms of succeeding in America. What they need is what *you* can help them gain. The Red Cloud Indian School is the largest private school for Indian children in the country. They have been scratching and sweating for nearly a century to educate vibrant, fertile, young Indian minds. With your help, they can continue this important work. In Pine Ridge, South Dakota, there are several hundred Sioux Indian children doing everything they can to "make it" in the culture foisted upon them. For people with so little, your contribution is crucial and important.

Please help these special children make a name for their race again. Your tax-deductible contribution, no matter how large, no matter how small, will make a big difference in their lives. A country's moral fortitude is measured by its treatment of those it has defeated. We defeated the Indians. Will you help them now? Please send your check or money order to:
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Pine Ridge, SD 57770

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Publisher's Page

The trouble with having an editorial page to fill is that sometimes there's nothing in particular we want to discuss, and then other times there is so much that we don't know where to start. This is one of the "other times." We'd like to comment on all the true-life espionage cases making the newspapers these days—most of them making our fiction stories read like fairy tales—but we're so angry about the censorship problems in the media that it's hard to take other things seriously.

Censorship, even though—for the moment—it doesn't directly affect ESPIONAGE Magazine, is so important a topic for discussion, and action, that we feel we must comment again on its threatening presence in our lives. You know what's going on, of course; how could you help knowing. But do you realize how completely pervasive censorship unchecked can be? Do you realize that letting a small but highly visible and vocal a group dictate those films you see, those books and magazines you read, is tantamount to letting that same small group dictate the way in which you live your lives? It's like "token alimony." Paying a dollar a year in alimony may not be a big deal but paying it opens the door for further court action in which you might very well be made to pay hundreds or thousands of dollars more.

Letting a little bit of censorship into our lives, by allowing pornography to be removed from possible purchase and perusal, opens the door to more and more censorship, until those power-hungry moral majority people are satisfied—and their satisfaction can only come when all of us are reading and viewing and worshiping and voting and living our lives in exactly the way they believe we should. "They" is an ambiguous term generally used to indicate the enemy, generally not identified. We can identify our enemy, in this case; it is all those people who, in ***their infinite wisdom***, know exactly what a good moral life is and how to live it . . . those people who call themselves the moral majority but who are indeed a very small, narrow-minded ***minority*** who believe that only the "Christian" way of life, as defined by them, is the right way of life. Lest you think we're being extreme in our statements, read their literature carefully and you will see that there is no room in their world for non-Christians or for people of "color."

Of course the simple point is that what we read and view is our own business, just as the way in which we vote and worship (or fail to vote and worship) is also our own business. Not you or we need or want anyone else telling us how to live our lives. Let's be very sure to let those creeps know that.

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ESPIONAGE® MAGAZINE
DECEMBER 1986
VOLUME 2 ISSUE

ABOUT. . .
People, Books, Video, Other Things ____ 6

Letters to The Editor ____ 18

The F.B.I.
by Rose M. Poole ____ 22

The Red Boxes
by Leo Whitaker ____ 28

Churchkill
by Chuck Meyer ____ 35

Betrayal
by K.L. Jones ____ 44

Trouble in Tinseltown
by William Schoell ____ 48

INTERVIEW: Bruce Boxleitner
by Stanley Wiater ____ 62

Last Time Out
by Rolle R. Rand ____ 70

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COVER ART Gail Garcia

A Spy Is Born
by Gene KoKayKo ____ 82

Black Light
by Bill Knox ____ 88

Puff The Magic Dragon
by Michael W. Masters ____ 108

Hello Again
by David P. Grady ____ 130

Holy War
by Frank Laffitte ____ 136

Who Dares Tell The President?
by Charles Naccarato ____ 143

On File
by Richard Walton ____ 155

Games ____ 159

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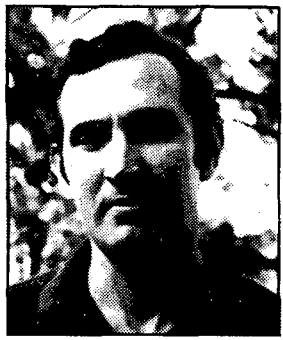
ABOUT. . .
People

Leo Whitaker is a 47 year old writer and native Southern Californian, with a BA in political science and an MA in international relations. He divides his time amongst political activism, fiction and exposé writing, and cultural interests. A self-professed Anglophile, Whitaker is married to a British citizen and has one son.

The plots of Frank Laffitte, a Floridian defector now operating out of Fayetteville, NC, in the guise of a sales rep, have been exposed in EGO, FAYETTEVILLE MAGAZINE, and THE JOHN D. MACDONALD BIBLIOPHILE. Other machinations are still under wraps.



Born in 1946, K.L. Jones has lived all his life in Illinois, most of it in Chicago. Married, his son was born the year his first short story was published. Other than writing, Jones occupies himself as a Public Defender, primarily in the Illinois Appellate Courts.

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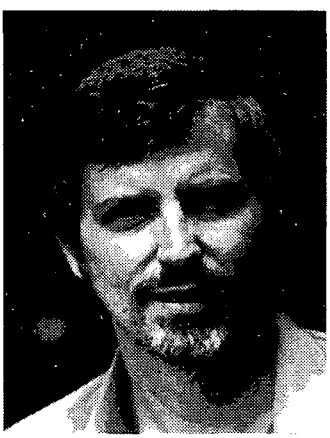
Rolle Rand was an editor with both Fawcett Publications and Popular Publications before entering the army in 1942. Subsequent to his military service, he was a staff writer for the DENVER POST and held other interesting jobs before returning full-time to writing. He has written and published many short stories, technical articles, and books (using at least two nom de plumes in the process).

The Reverend Charles Meyer is an ordained priest in the Diocese of Texas, Protestant Episcopal Church in USA. Beyond his pastoral duties, which include teaching, counseling and chaplaining, Meyer has been writing for publication for close to 10 years. "Churchkill," in this issue, is his first piece of fiction. We're happy he has begun what promises to be a rewarding career as a secular writer with ESPIONAGE!



In his first career, Michael W. Masters is a computer software designer working on advanced Navy command and control systems. An avid student of the history of warfare, particularly the second World War, Masters has moved from reading adventure fiction into writing it. "Puff The Magic Dragon" is his first published story along these lines. Another hearty welcome to another brand new fiction writer!

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ABOUT. . .
Books

by Brian L. Burley

BUTTON ZONE, *by Wilfred Greatorex.* Published by New American Library, a Signet book, New York, NY, March, 1986, PB, 381 pp.

For years, British agent Calvin Rudge, alias Queen's Messenger Wing Commander Sir Edwin Norman, had traveled every few weeks to Moscow, to await the signal that KGB bureaucrat Yuri Kharkov was ready to defect. Rudge's remarkable resemblance to Kharkov had been maintained and enhanced through such diets, weight-gaining programs, and minor surgery as continuous surveillance of Kharkov had shown to be necessary. Now Kharkov was ready to leave the Soviet Union, with information about a planned Warsaw Pact invasion of Western Europe, as well as startling news that a mole close to the President of the United States was prepared for assassination. Such a move would secure the accession of a self-proclaimed isolationist vice-president, a man whom the Soviets knew would not risk the nuclear destruction of the United States just to save the Europeans.

In a complex plot, Kharkov is finally delivered to British intelligence. But the American "in-laws" refuse to take action, and Rudge must go to the U.S. and save the American bacon. A general description of this book makes it sound exciting, but it isn't. The story line is predictable, with cardboard characters going through pre-programmed routines. Even the love interest is boring. Not recommended.

COMRADES, *by Paul Leaf.* Published by New American Library, a Signet Book, New York, NY, March, 1986. PB, 362 pp.

This is a fictionalized version of the Hollywood Blacklist of suspected Communists in the late '40s and early '50s, which was stirred up by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Mike Rossano and Robert Thompson became close while fighting with the Abraham Lincoln Battalion in the Spanish Civil War. Each saved the other's life and the bond between the two seemed unbreakable. After they left Spain, Thompson married another comrade, Katherine. The three of them, their lives totally intertwined, went on to become successful in their respective fields. Rossano and

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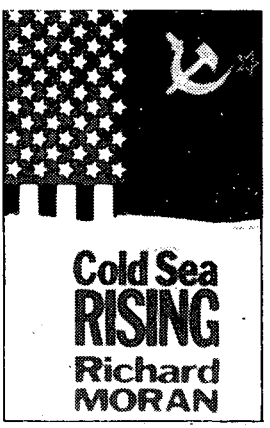
Thompson again see service in World War II, with great heroism and great results. When all are reunited after the war, however, strains begin to show in the relationships.

The book has a somewhat uneven pace, alternating periods of intense action with drawnout explorations of the characters' sexual exploits. In balance, however, it all comes together to paint a graphic picture of the times and the characters. The ending, raising the issues of comradeship vs personal safety, and betrayal and reconciliation, is powerful and brought tears to my eyes. Recommended.



COLD SEA RISING, *by Richard Moran.* Published by Arbor House, New York, NY, April, 1986. HB, 352 pp.

Joshua Mc Coy, *The New York Times'* top science reporter, was onto the biggest story of his, or anyone else's career. His former father-in-law, retired U.S. Navy Admiral Waldo Rankin, had entrusted him with the task of warning the world that the largest iceberg in history had broken loose from Antarctica and was on the way to the equator. Its melting would raise sea levels around the world and flood out most of the world's harbors and cities.

In the Soviet Union, top scientists and political officials had also become aware of the impending disaster, which would injure them far more than it would many other nations. Certain high ranking military officers conceived of a daring but risky plan to turn the crisis into total victory for the Soviets. Against strong opposition, it was implemented.

In order to be really effective, a natural disaster novel needs more than the usual fictional requirements of skillful plotting and character development. A sound, credible technical footing is equally required. Although this book shows evidence of the reported two years of research, the author misunderstood the details he so painstakingly presented. The forces involved—those of the earth itself—are so far ahead of the scale of human efforts or technology, even the technology of 1995 in which the book is set, that nothing could have changed the outcome. Civilization would have ended on schedule. There could be no happy ending. In spite of this fatal flaw, I enjoyed most of the book. The situation was dramatic, and the characters were very human. Recommended for only the first 316 pages.

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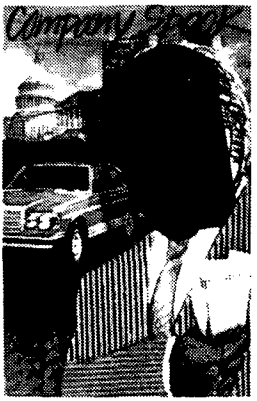

COMPANY SPOOK, *by Ronald Weber.* Published by St. Martin's Press, New York, NY, March, 1986. HB, 134 pp.

Walker was a reporter for the Washington Globe. With his co-worker Bickel, and the aid of an anonymous source code-named "Deep Well," he had gained fame by breaking the "Potomac Complex" scandal. Their investigations revealed the existence of the "repairmen," a secret administration covert action group. As a result, the President resigned and his administration fell.

Now "Deep Well" is back in town, trying to involve Walker in an undisclosed mission. As the "plot" unfolds, we learn (again) that "they" are everywhere, but can be beaten again, anyhow. "Deep Well" is revealed to be a "company" agent, and the company is out to make everything all right. Maybe this was intended to be a satire. If it was, it doesn't make it. The only redeeming virtue to this turkey is its length. Skip it.

JAMES BOND: The Authorized Biography of 007, *by John Pearson.* Published by Grove Press, New York, NY, 1986. PB, 314 pp.

This book, a reprint of the 1973 British edition, is a refreshing change from many fictionalized "biographies" that merely recap the events recounted in a popular series. Indeed, mention of Ian Fleming's novels occupies a very small part of the book. Pearson's thesis is that Bond and Fleming, if not friends, were at least frequent acquaintances. Fleming was deeply connected with the British Secret Service, and wrote the novels to convince the Soviets that their nemesis, 007, was a myth. Some of the novels were based on real exploits of Bond's, and some of them were pure fantasy.

I found this book to be more readable than some of the recent pastiches. Since Pearson states that Fleming purposely distorted the character of the real Bond, I found myself getting to know a new character, rather than expecting the consistency of Fleming's work. The "real" character is somewhat more complex. It is, however, important to note that there is no attempt to convince the reader that we really were mistaken about Fleming's books: The title page clearly labels it a "fictional biography." As such, enjoy it. Recommended for an evening of light reading.

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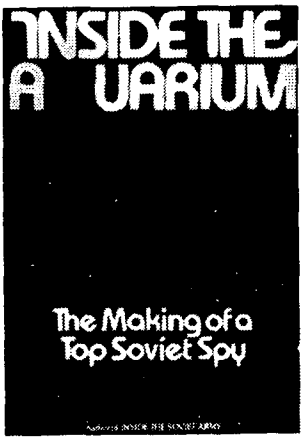

INSIDE THE AQUARIUM, *by Viktor Suvorov.* Published by Macmillan Publishing Co., New York, NY, March, 1965, HB, 247 pp.

This book is a companion to Suvorov's *Inside Soviet Military Intelligence,* reviewed favorably in the August, 1986, issue. The former book discussed the overall history and strategy of the GRU. The present one, subtitled "The Making of a Top Soviet Spy," is more autobiographical. It traces Suvorov's career from his recruitment into the intelligence service while a Senior-Lieutenant in the tank corps, shortly after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, to his defection to the British in Vienna in 1979.

Suvorov, it seems, did not defect because of dissatisfaction with the Soviet system, but because he expected punishment for a mistake. He had helped punish similar mistakes in the past. Throughout the book, Suvorov mentions almost casually the constant testing by superiors and the constant spying on colleagues that is a part of the life of a member of the Soviet elite. A product of the Soviet system, he takes such treatment for granted. Any doubts are suppressed. Rather, he thinks the most efficient way to prevent potential problems is with a process Americans would call "entrapment." If an individual fails, this is regrettable, but it is for the good of the state.

This is an important book. It presents a view of the military forces of the Soviet Union that will shake the complacency of the average American. Recommended.

THE SARDINE DECEPTION, *by Lief Davidsen.* Translated from the Danish by Tiina Nunnally and Steve Murray. Published by Fjord Press. Seattle, WA, April, 1986. Trade PB, 199 pp.

Poul Jensen was the mild, stay-at-home husband of the well known Danish TV correspondent Charlotte Damsborg. When his wife dies in a Basque terrorist explosion in Spain, Jensen flies to Madrid. On the plane, he encounters Swedish journalist Claes Hylander, one of his wife's many lovers. This is the first of many coincidences and not-quite coincidences that sweep Jensen into contact with the Basque independence movement, the ETA, a plot to assassinate the

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King of Spain that is more complex than it appears, and finally to the solution of the mystery of his wife's death.

Jensen is a complex but passive character, and, although we observe events through his eyes, he rarely participates of his own volition. Much time is spent exploring contemporary sexual and marital relationships, and that somewhat '60ish preoccupation slows down the story a bit. The translation is generally smooth, with only a few unfamiliar idioms to interrupt the reader. The publisher is a small house, so the book may be a little hard to find, but if you run into it, it is a fast read and probably worth your time.

ABOUT. . .
Video

by Carl Martin

Kartes Video Communications, Inc. produces a series entitled *Video Film Classics.* Originally, this was limited to public-domain features made from the highest quality print available. Each is recorded on a good blank and packaged in uniform library boxes.

Now Kartes has been licensed to distribute a number of copyrighted titles and the price for many of these more modern features is the same $19.95 price their public-domain features command.

Among the titles in their catalog are a couple of my favorites:

HE WALKED BY NIGHT; 1948; 78 minutes: This is the story of a lone wolf master criminal who drives the Los Angeles police to a near frenzy. Though it is told in a semi-documentary style, there is enough action and suspense to satisfy anyone, and the final chase through the city storm sewers won't be easily forgotten. The stars are Richard Basehart and Scott Brady (in their prime).

D.O.A.; 1949; 83 minutes: Here is a mystery-suspense movie that still ranks with the best of the genre. A man who up to this point had led a rather uneventful life finds out that he has been slipped a deadly poison. He will soon be dead and nothing can be done to save him. He sets out on a frantic search for his killer and the motive behind his murder. Edmond O'Brien is memorable as the victim. This

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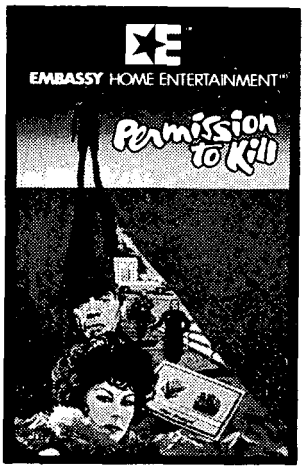
film was remade several years later in Australia with Thom Tryon in the starring role, but it didn't have the impact of the original.

Victory for Viewers

I like to announce price reductions because most prices seem more than a little outrageous to me:

VICTORY AT SEA (Embassy Home Entertainment) was originally released in 26 volumes at a price of $518.70. Now this award-winning World War II documentary is being brought out in a collector's edition in which every inch of the original footage has been put on only six cassettes and encased in a gift box. The price of this new edition is $149.70, or $24.95 for individual tapes, a saving of more than 80 percent.



SHORT TAKES

PERMISSION TO KILL (Embassy Home Entertainment; ?; 96 min.; PG) Dirk Bogarde heads an outstanding cast as a Western intelligence agent out to stop an exiled politician from returning to his homeland. His methods in "persuading" the man's ex-lover, Ava Gardner, and his friend, Frederic Forrest *(The Rose* and *Apocalypse Now),* to help him are as dirty and Machiavellian as the job requires. Bogarde as the polite, soft-spoken agent proceeds with confidence despite all set-backs and opposition. He knows something no one else does—he has permission to kill.

NIGHT FLIGHT FROM MOSCOW (Charter Entertainment; 1973; 113 min.; PG) stars Yul Brynner, Henry Fonda and Dirk Bogarde in an amazing story of cold war intrigue and espionage. It gives an inside view of high-level master spies in action that is guaranteed to keep you guessing right to the end.

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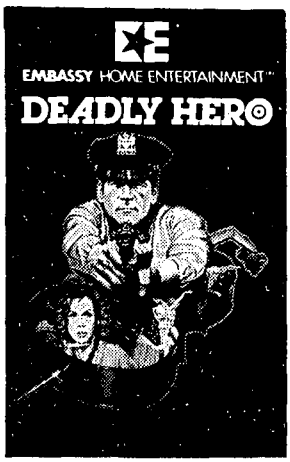
D-DAY PLUS 40 YEARS (Embassy Home Entertainment; 1984; 52 min.; $24.95) is a look at June 6, 1944, from the viewpoint of many of the participants. Hosted by Tom Brokaw, and enriched by the perspective of time, this documentary gives us a view of the Normandy invasion, a momentous event that turned the tide of World War II and influenced the shape of our world today.

ELENI (Embassy Home Entertainment; 1985; 116 min.; PG) is a true story of love and vengeance. Nicholas Gage, a reporter for the *New York Times,* returns to Greece, the land of his birth, to find the man who murdered his mother. Director Peter Yates and writer Steve Tesich worked well together in the past with *Breaking Away.*

CALL HIM MR. SHATTER (Charter Entertainment; 1974; 90 min.; R) stars Stuart Whitman as an international contract killer out to get the president of a Third World country. One of the many films inspired by the James Bond series, it packs a lot of entertainment into its hour and a half.



DEADLY HERO (Embassy Home Entertainment; 1975; 96 min.; PG) is the story of a psychotic cop (Don Murray) who kills a surrendering thief. He is hailed as a hero, and then the truth slowly comes out. The fine actor James Earl Jones almost steals the film in his role as the thief. Jones will be known to almost everyone as the voice of Darth Vader.

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ABOUT. . .
Other Things

by Ernest Volkman

Soviet Spy Subs in San Francisco?

The Navy is not especially eager to discuss the subject, but there are persistent reports that the telltale tracks of miniature spy submarines have been spotted on the floor of San Francisco Bay near several important U.S. Navy installations.

According to these reports, the tracks were first spotted last summer during some routine diving work. Since the American Navy had no miniature subs operating in the area, the conclusion was inescapable: the subs were Russian.

There is no hard evidence that this is indeed what happened, but some sources note that the sub tracks—or what are believed to be sub tracks—match the ones found in waters off the coast of Sweden during the past few years.

The submarines are assigned to the Soviet *Spetsnaz* (Special Forces), a burgeoning component of the Russian military who would seize key points and conduct commando operations in a future war. An important aspect of those operations is the gathering of intelligence, and that's where the miniature subs come in.

The subs, according to sources, are specially-constructed 65-foot-long models that are dispatched from a "mother" submarine lying offshore. The little subs move along the seabed on tracks similar to those on a tank, or can maneuver in the water using specially-silenced engines and a propeller.

The seabed-crawl method is preferred, since it conserves fuel. It also leaves distinctive tracks—no sea animal would leave marks looking like tank treads—which have been spotted and photographed off Sweden.

The mission of the mini-subs is reconnaissance, since their small size and seabed-crawl method of locomotion make them very difficult to detect by ordinary sonar or other methods. Most of the subs are assigned to the GRU, Soviet military intelligence, indicating that in a future war, the subs will infiltrate heavily-guarded naval bases or other important targets. Following some years of development, the subs became fully operational, it is believed, somewhere around 1981. There has been extensive operational testing in Swedish waters, an important objective for the Soviets in the event of a general European war.

Since then, some experts be-

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lieve, the subs are being tested in other waters, especially in the United States. Officially, U.S. Navy spokesmen say they have no confirmation of the reported sightings of mini-subs in San Francisco, but, privately, some Navy officials say they have seen reports of similar sightings in Japan and Spain. For that reason, they believe the unconfirmed reports about San Francisco are probably correct.

Meanwhile, some light may be shed on all this by the recent defection to this country of a top Soviet scientist involved in oceanographic research and related matters, mostly having to do with scientific support for the Soviet navy's submarine fleet. Among other things, the Americans would like to know if the Russian defector knows anything about little subs that are crawling around the world's seabeds—especially here.

Take That, New Zealand!

In a snit over New Zealand's refusal to allow nuclear-armed American warships into its harbors, the White House has struck back by virtually cutting off the supply of all Western Intelligence to that country.

In fact, things have gotten so chilly between the American intelligence apparatus and its New Zealand counterpart, the CIA station chief in London—acting under orders from headquarters—made it clear he didn't think it was a good idea for the New Zealand intelligence representative to par-

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ticipate any further in deliberations of the Joint Intelligence Committee in London. That group, a coordinating committee of top intelligence officials from the U.S., Australia, Great Britain, Canada and New Zealand, is supposed to share intelligence with each other.

However, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has told the New Zealanders they will no longer be welcome at meetings of the committee. As a result, the New Zealanders are somewhat upset. New Zealand has only a tiny intelligence apparatus—less than 250 people work in it—and is heavily dependent on the Americans and British, especially, for important intelligence. With the drying up of that source, New Zealand is about to become nearly blind—in intelligence terms.

Life Imitates Art

At first glance, the plot of John Le Carré's novel, *The Little Drummer Girl,* seems improbable: an Israeli spymaster brainwashes a British actress (who is also a notorious Palestinian sympathizer) into participating in a complex operation to track down and execute a leading Palestinian terrorist.

Yet, an eerie reprise of that plot took place recently in Great Britain, where a real Palestinian terrorist named Nezar Hindawi seduced—and impregnated—a plain-looking English girl. Madly in love with Hindawi, she did not pay much attention to a suitcase he insisted on giving her personally just before she departed on an El Al flight to Israel. Fortunately, alert El Al security agents discovered that the suitcase contained a sophisticated bomb that would have killed everyone aboard the plane.

The entire relationship between Hindawi and the young woman, British officials learned, was part of a plan to use her in the attempt to destroy an El Al airliner. But the young woman, who continues to insist she is the fiancee of Hindawi—and that he really loved her all along—refuses to believe she was a pawn in a deadly game of international terrorism.

An Interesting Pilot

There was more than met the eye the other day when a 747 air cargo plane was flown to mainland China by a Taiwanese pilot, who announced his intention to defect. China Airlines of Taiwan successfully negotiated with the Chinese to get its plane back, but were puzzled by the strong interest of the other side in the pilot, one Wang Hsi-chuen.

Actually, the reason for the interest in him is that Wang once flew U-2 spy planes for Taiwan back in the 1960s, when they were used for a series of spy overflights of the mainland. Now the Chinese would like to find out all about those flights, and how much intelligence they managed to collect. With the Sino-American rapprochement in 1972, the flights were cancelled, but there is still

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much the Chinese would like to know.

A No-No on Laos

For nearly six years, the first detailed official account of American air operations in Laos from 1960 to 1968 has been gathering dust on a shelf, unpublished.

Interestingly, the reason it has not gone to the printer is not because of opposition from the military or the intelligence agencies, but the State Department. Curiously, despite the fact that there is general public knowledge that the U.S. carried out many covert missions in Laos during those years, and that our involvement ended more than a decade ago, the State Department fears that revelations now might cause diplomatic complications.

In plain words, the fear is that details of the American operations from those years may prove somewhat shocking, since they involve violations of the Geneva Accords, subterfuges of Laotian neutrality, and several incursions into North Vietnam.

Our Men on Capitol Hill?

American officials don't take it very seriously, but a defecting, low-level KGB operative in France shocked his debriefers by claiming that no less than three members of the U.S. Congress were once KGB agents. He offered no proof of this astonishing allegation and FBI intelligence officials say privately they attach no credence to the claim.

The South Korean Connection

Balked by continuing congressional opposition toward funding the Contra rebels fighting the Nicaraguan Sandinistas, the CIA has found a back door method. Much aid is now coming from South Korea, which funnels it via several "private" groups helping the Contras.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Jackie:

Actually, I was delighted with the results of your '85 short-story contest. I need more competition like James Bond needs his old Baretta back—the one that jams. It

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is hard enough trying to catch up with the old pros who already write for ESPIONAGE without "new" people popping up. I know: Be compassionate, Gene. After all, you were a college student once. I still feel like a college student most of the time, as if I'm just breaking into the big leagues. And (as far as I'm concerned) ESPIONAGE is the big leagues. I need the credits for my novel work, if nothing else. (Which was a silly, pretentious sentence, Gene. You also need the money and the attention, admit it!) Okay.

My two high school boys said, "We'll give it a shot, Dad." "Won't work," I told them. "You have to be in college." "But we read the magazine and we can write." What can I say? My fifteen year old said: "It would be easy, I'd use one of your old story lines." "That's plagiarism," I told him. "I'd change it a little," he said. "Thief!" "But you've gotta million of 'em, Dad. You wouldn't even miss it!"

What the young students need to do is think "story" constantly. And learn manuscript mechanics. And learn the terms, which are plentiful, indeed. Learn where the *Unter Den Linden* is, even if you haven't been to Germany. Learn the agencies on all sides, and learn what a "Dead Runner" is. Most of my characters are "Dead Runners," throwaway freelancers who no one cares about. It creates more sympathy than if they worked for the CIA, whom I have trouble feeling sorry for, somehow.

What they also need to learn is not to write long long letters to an editor, when they know she must be busy. I'd never do that. (This is the seventh letter I've written; I just don't mail them.)

I have a 21 year old daughter who, finally, after much practice, writes pretty good non-fiction. Maybe I can convince her to enter the contest. I'd enter the thing, if I was eligible. She's a college student at USC—and she's a beautiful girl—and I don't really know if she can write her way out of a paper bag. (Trite, Gene. You have to avoid trite like the plague.) I'll try to talk her into it, though my wife will scold. "Quit pushing people," she will correctly tell me. "You can't force people to write. Just because you spend twelve hours a day at your typewriter doesn't mean everyone else wants to." I can't imagine why not. There is nothing more important. Is there?

Gene KoKayKo
Pueblo, CO

No.

Dear Sirs:

In response to your announcement concerning your first annual short story contest, in the August 1986 issue, you say that the entries were so poor that none could be printed. The most obvious solution is to make the contest open to anybody at any age who has not published a work of fiction. By making it open to everyone, you would probably get more and

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hopefully higher quality entries. I'm sure that there are many people out there, who are not college students, who would like to submit a short story to your magazine (including myself).

Since I am writing, I would like to compliment your magazine. It is consistently informative, interesting and entertaining. Keep up the good work.

Scott Charles Bradley
Brighton, MO

If we open our contest to everyone, there ceases to be a reason to have the contest—except for our regular columns, all the writing in ESPIONAGE is done by free-lance writers, including young and old, college educated and not, male and female, American or non-American, and so on. Our magazine is and always has been totally open to all writers; our contest remains an encouragement to college students to try their hand at professional level writing.

Dear Ms. Lewis:

I wanted to write to let you know that I have been reading and enjoying ESPIONAGE Magazine for about a year now. I feel that it has just the perfect combination of fact and fiction and "fictionalized fact." The only thing I don't like is that ESPIONAGE is a bi-monthly publication instead of a monthly. With that in mind, I was glad to read in your response to Mr. Dearborn's letter in the June '86 issue that soon ESPIONAGE will be a monthly. Hallelujah! Keep up the great work!

Lastly, I'd like to say that I personally feel that including pulp fiction like "The Executioner," "The Destroyer," and "The Death Merchant," et. al, would not enhance the quality of your magazine. In fact, I think it would detract from it. Also, the idea of raising the price from the very reasonable $2.50 per issue to $3.95 per issue is just real bad. You have a very unique and quality mag here. I hope you leave it just the way it is.

Dan Wesson
College Station, TX

Thanks, Mr. Wesson. All things will remain about the same for the foreseeable future. Including our being a bi-monthly instead of a monthly. While we'd like to increase our frequency, we can't do it until our sales warrant it. So. . .talk to your friends about buying hundreds (or thousands) of copies of each issue! That should do it!

Dear Ms. Lewis:

I enjoyed your June issue. However, P.E. Halycon lost a bit of credibility in "Sabotage" when he talks about F-104s flying from aircraft carriers. The F-104 is an obsolete Air Force jet. I thought at first it might have been a typo and that he meant F-14, but he also refers to the plane as a *Starfighter*, which is the correct terminology for an F-104. Oh well, even Ian

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Fleming made mistakes about weaponry and other technical matters.

On the nonfiction side, I have a couple of brief comments on some of Ernest Volkman's articles. He wonders why the KGB might have gone to the trouble of penetrating an ineffective, ultra-right wing West German party. I see two possibilities here. One is that the KGB may simply be demonstrating Soviet paranoia about neo-Nazis. U.S. intelligence has a similar fixation with Communist parties, no matter how small and weak they are. The second possibility is that the KGB may be using the neo-Nazis to play upon West German fears of a resurgence of Hitlerism, thus causing many Germans to see their salvation in the parties of the left. Hitler, himself, used the reverse of this tactic very successfully. He frightened many Germans into the arms of his Nazi Party by raising the specter of Communism. The final blow in that campaign became when he succeeded in blaming the Communists for burning the Reichstag.

Mr. Volkman drew one other conclusion which is both inaccurate and misleading. In his piece on terrorism, he is correct (at least as far as I know) in assuming that there is no "smoking gun" which directly links the KGB to world terrorism. However, he erred seriously when he lumped terrorism with sabotage. He indicated that the notion the KGB has "sleeper" saboteurs came from a Czech defector who fabricated much of his information. Volkman went on to state that defector Sejna's phony sabotage network story grew by leaps and bounds because it gained acceptance by various right-wing journalists and some intelligence services. However, Soviet employment of "sleeper" saboteurs is documented by at least two reliable, unclassified sources. The first is John Barron in his book, "KGB: The Secret Work of Soviet Secret Agents." Barron refers to the expulsion of 105 Soviet "diplomats" by the British in 1971. British intelligence had compiled evidence that at least some Soviets were engaged in sabotage planning. The second source is the former Soviet army officer who writes under the pseudonym of "Suvorov." In his writings about SPETSNAZ, the Soviet army's special operations forces, Suvorov confirms that the GRU (Soviet military intelligence) has recruited sleeper saboteurs in Western Europe. These individuals would be activated in the event of war between the Warsaw Pact (countries) and NATO. While the terrorist connection remains unclear, sabotage is a different matter. The two should not be lumped together and dismissed out of hand as the creation of a fabricating defector or of the CIA.

Larry Brown
Brooklyn, IA

I would bet we'll have further correspondence on this topic. . .

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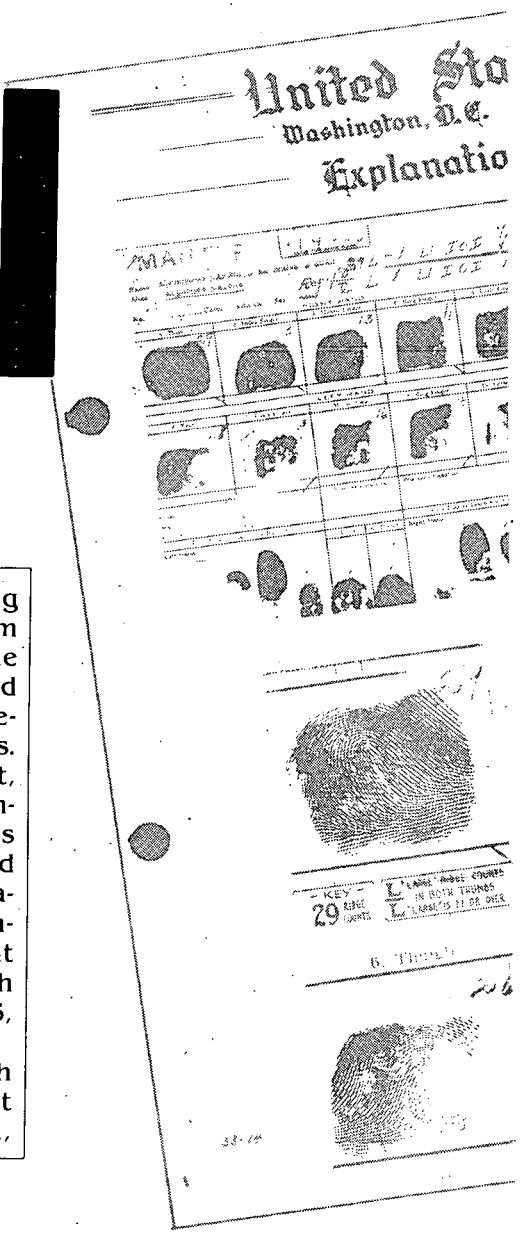
THE FBI

by Rose M. Poole



Crime had been increasing in the United States from coast to coast since the beginning of the century, and corruption had become widespread in business and politics. President Theodore Roosevelt, fuming with indignation at Congress' refusal to act against this demoralizing wave, instructed Attorney General Charles Bonaparte to create a Bureau of Investigation in the Department of Justice, with Stanley W. Finch as Chief Examiner, on July 26, 1908.

The Bureau started out with just thirty-five men, all without experience in crime detection,

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Bureau of Investigation

J. Edgar Hoover, Director

Fingerprint Classification of Alphonse Capone

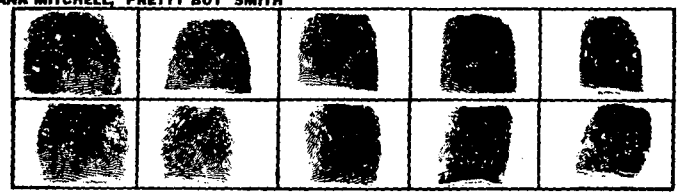
IDENTIFICATION ORDER No. 1194 June 22, 1933

UNITED STATES BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Fingerprint Classification
23 L 1 U 000 19
L 1 U 000

WANTED

CHARLES ARTHUR FLOYD, aliases
FRANK MITCHELL, "PRETTY BOY" SMITH



DESCRIPTION

Age, 26 years
Height, 5 feet, 81 inches
Weight, 195 pounds
Hair, dark
Eyes, gray
Complexion, medium
Nationality, American
Scars and marks, 1 fac. cic.
1 tattoo (Nurse in Rose)

Chas A. Floyd

CRIMINAL RECORD

As Charles Arthur Floyd, No. 27918, arrested police department, St. Louis, Missouri, September 16, 1925; charge, highway robbery.
As Charles Floyd, No. 29078, receives S.P., Jefferson City, Missouri, December 18, 1926, from St. Louis; crime, robbery, first degree; sentence, 5 years.
As Charles A. Floyd, No. 14950, arrested police department, Kansas City, Missouri, March 9, 1929; charge, investigation.
As Charles Floyd, No. 3999, arrested police department, Kansas City, Kansas, May 6, 1929; charge, vagrancy and suspicion - highway robbery; released May 7, 1929.
As Charles Floyd, No. 867, arrested police department, Pueblo, Colorado, May 9, 1929; charge, vagrancy; fined $50 and sentenced to serve 60 days in jail.
As Frank Mitchell, No. 19983, arrested police department, Akron, Ohio, March 8, 1930; charge, investigation.
As Charles Arthur Floyd, No. 21458, arrested police department, Toledo, Ohio, May 20, 1930; charge, suspicion.
As Charles Arthur Floyd, sentenced November 20, 1930, to serve from 12 to 15 years in Ohio State Penitentiary (bank robbery, Sylvania, Ohio); escaped enroute to penitentiary.

Charles Arthur Floyd is wanted in connection with the murder of Otto Reed, Chief of Police of McAlester, Oklahoma, William J. Grooms and Frank E. Hermanson, police officers of Kansas City, Missouri, Raymond J. Caffrey, Special Agent of the United States Bureau of Investigation, and their prisoner, Frank Nash, at Kansas City, Missouri, on June 17, 1933.

Law enforcement agencies kindly transmit any additional information or criminal record to nearest office, United States Bureau of Investigation.

If apprehended, please notify Special Agent in Charge, United States Bureau of Investigation, 903 Federal Reserve Bank Building, Kansas City, Missouri, and the Director, United States Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, Washington, D. C.

Issued by: JOHN EDGAR HOOVER, Director

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and very little guidance. Some of the men appointed to their positions for political reasons rather than competence. The functions of the new agency were very limited until the *White Slave Traffic Act* was passed in 1910. At that time, women were being transported from one state to another for immoral purposes. The Bureau was given authority over the interstate transportation of women and, from that day on, it became a national crime-fighting agency.

The demands on the agency increased rapidly over the next few years, and it began to hit its stride investigating and putting a stop to the many acts of sabotage and espionage that took place during World War I.

During the unrest and violence that plagued the country after the end of the war, it was soon evident that the original, small group of inexperienced agents was not able to cope with the number and nature of the crimes that demanded their attention. Some drastic changes were necessary.

In May 1924, J. Edgar Hoover was appointed Director of the FBI. Hoover was a lawyer, and a most ambitious young man, who had started out as a messenger boy in the Library of Congress. In his new position of authority, his first act was to select the men who were to work for him, the selection based solely on the merit of their qualifications and ability. He opened a training school for Special Agents, accepting only college graduates with degrees in law or accounting. He also decreed that promotions were to be earned on the basis of performance and achievement, only.

Hoover was determined to make his organization an effec-

Mrs. Roy Thorton, aliases Bonnie Barrow, Mrs. Clyde Barrow, Bonnie Parker.

Clyde Champion Barrow, aliases, Clyde Barrow, Roy Bailey, Jack Hale, Eldin Williams, Elvin Williams.

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tive crime-fighting force of well-trained professionals. He accumulated a wealth of fingerprint records and, in time, his fingerprint file became the largest in the world. He also established a scientific crime detection laboratory to analyze blood, hair, firearms, handwriting, and all other kinds of evidence—during its first year of operation, it conducted more than 900 examinations of handwriting in extortion cases. State and local law enforcement agencies were soon being assisted in their fight against ever-increasing crime by the Bureau's highly efficient laboratory.

Hoover encouraged cooperation between law enforcement agencies to the extent that, since 1935, when the agency was officially named the *Federal Bureau of Investigation,* police officers have been trained at the FBI National Academy. The training quarters were in Washington, D.C. until 1940, when they were moved to the new facility at the U.S. Marine Base in Quantico, Virginia. Since 1972, the Police Academy has had extensive training for their officers in the FBI facility.

During the early thirties, gangsters were frequently getting away with murder by crossing from one state to another to avoid being prosecuted by local authorities. This was the time of the Kansas City Massacre, as well as many other notorious crimes: FBI agents and policemen were conducting a convict to the penitentiary when four of them were killed by the "Pretty Boy" Floyd gang. The desperado John Dillinger robbed dozens of banks, raided police stations and broke out of the Warsaw, Indiana, jail by fashioning a pistol from a piece of wood and painting it black. Three FBI agents were slain in a shoot-out with "Baby Face" Nelson. Then, Bonnie and Clyde, out on a rampage of robbing and killing, led the law enforcement officers on a merry chase throughout the Midwest. The FBI was helpless to stop the gangsters for it had no jurisdiction over criminals fleeing across state lines.

In May of 1934, Congress passed anti-crime laws that gave the FBI authority to act in interstate crimes. The agents then set out after the gangsters that had been terrorizing the country. "Pretty Boy" Floyd was killed while resisting arrest, Dillinger was killed in an alley in Chicago, and many of the other gangsters, including Bonnie and Clyde, met with the same fate. It was "Machine Gun" Kelly, when arrested, who gave FBI agents the nickname of "G-men."

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, during World War II, gave the FBI additional powers to combat espionage and sabotage. In one action, the agents

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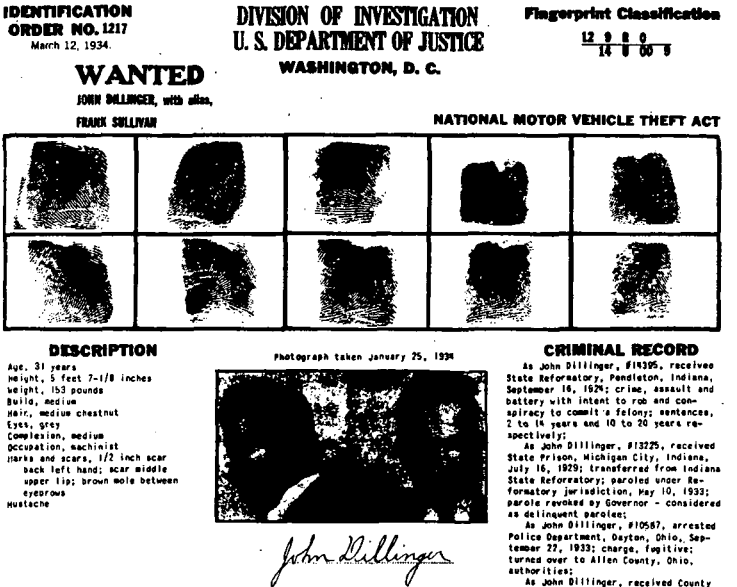

IDENTIFICATION ORDER NO. 1217
March 12, 1934.

DIVISION OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Fingerprint Classification
12 9 R 0
14 W 00 9

WANTED

JOHN DILLINGER, with alias,
FRANK SULLIVAN

NATIONAL MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT ACT

DESCRIPTION

Age, 31 years
Height, 5 feet 7-1/8 inches
Weight, 153 pounds
Build, medium
Hair, medium chestnut
Eyes, grey
Complexion, medium
Occupation, machinist
Marks and scars, 1/2 inch scar back left hand; scar middle upper lip; brown mole between eyebrows
Mustache

Photograph taken January 25, 1934

John Dillinger

CRIMINAL RECORD

As John Dillinger, #19395, received State Reformatory, Pendleton, Indiana, September 16, 1924; crime, assault and battery with intent to rob and conspiracy to commit a felony; sentences, 2 to 14 years and 10 to 20 years respectively;

As John Dillinger, #13225, received State Prison, Michigan City, Indiana, July 16, 1929; transferred from Indiana State Reformatory; paroled under Reformatory jurisdiction, May 10, 1933; parole revoked by Governor - considered as delinquent parolee;

As John Dillinger, #10567, arrested Police Department, Dayton, Ohio, September 22, 1933; charge, fugitive; turned over to Allen County, Ohio, authorities;

As John Dillinger, received County Jail, Lima, Ohio, September 28, 1933; charge, bank robbery; escaped October 12, 1933;

As Frank Sullivan, arrested Police Department, Tucson, Arizona, January 25, 1934; charge, fugitive; turned over to Lake County, Indiana, authorities;

As John Dillinger, #14687, arrested Sheriff's Office, Crown Point, Indiana, January 30, 1934; charge, murder - bank robbery; escaped March 3, 1934.

The United States Marshal, Chicago, Illinois, holds warrant of arrest charging John Dillinger with feloniously and knowingly transporting Ford V-8 four door sedan, motor number 2568147, property of Lillian Holley, Sheriff, Lake County, Indiana, from Crown Point, Indiana to Chicago, Illinois, on or about March 3, 1934.

Law enforcement agencies kindly transmit any additional information or criminal record to the nearest office of the Division of Investigation, U. S. Department of Justice.

If apprehended, please notify the Director, Division of Investigation, U. S. Department of Justice, Washington, D. C., or the Special Agent in Charge of the Office of the Division of Investigation listed on the back hereof which is nearest your city.

(over)

Issued by: J. EDGAR HOOVER, DIRECTOR.

set a trap that caught a ring of nineteen Nazi spies, who had been operating in the country for a long time. In another, they captured two groups of saboteurs, who had landed from Nazi U-boats, one in Long Island and one near Jacksonville, Florida. They had been sent by the Nazis to blow up Hell Gate Bridge in New York, to destroy plants manufacturing strategic materials for the war effort, and to spread terror throughout the country.

Then there was the case of the woman who ran a doll shop in New York City. Her letters about dolls, sent to a woman in Buenos Aires, aroused the suspicions of the censorship examiners. The letters were submitted to the FBI and their technicians determined that the signatures had been forged and that the letters were in open code. The "dolls" were the naval vessels hit at Pearl Harbor. The woman, Velvalee Dickinson, was engaged in espionage for the Japanese, who paid her $25,000 for the information she sent. She was indicted, sentenced to ten years in prison, and fined $1,000.

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Since World War II, aware of the increase in Communist activity in this country, the FBI has conducted intensive investigations of people suspected of passing vital information to other world powers. They are more alert to the rising crime rate, too: After six years of investigation, the FBI was responsible for the arrest and conviction of nine of the men who robbed the Brinks company of Boston, Massachusetts of more than two million dollars. And they caught the man who blew up a passenger plane with forty-four persons aboard, just to kill his mother, who was one of the passengers, in order to get her insurance.

When Hoover took charge of the Bureau of Investigation, there were three women working there. Two soon resigned but Mrs. Jessie B. Duckstein became a Special Agent. Hoover asked her to resign, however, when another Special Agent pointed out that it was not advisable to have women as agents. At the present time, women, blacks and other minorities, who were never before invited in, are being actively recruited to work for the FBI. Prospective members must be citizens between the ages of 23 and 35, with degrees in languages, law, accounting or science.

There have been many changes in the FBI since its birth more than seventy-five years ago. Under Hoover's leadership, it became famous for its "upright" code and freedom from political control. Today, the FBI is a powerful organization with jurisdiction over more than 200 different types of crime. Its scientific laboratory is, no doubt, the best equipped in the world, and can conduct scientific examinations on more than 155,000 pieces of evidence a year using highly specialized techniques. Among its training centers is the National Executive Institute, set up to train police chiefs for the nation's law enforcement agencies. One of the FBI divisions, the National Crime Information Center, has millions of records on missing persons, fugitives from justice, and stolen property. These records are available to local, state and federal authorities in the United States, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the police in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The Identification Division today contains more than 175 million fingerprint cards, and computer science is now being incorporated into the various divisions of the Bureau.

Although remaining separate from other investigative agencies of the government, the FBI cooperates when needed in the ongoing investigation of crime and espionage within our continental borders. ■

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Illustration by Dan Scontras

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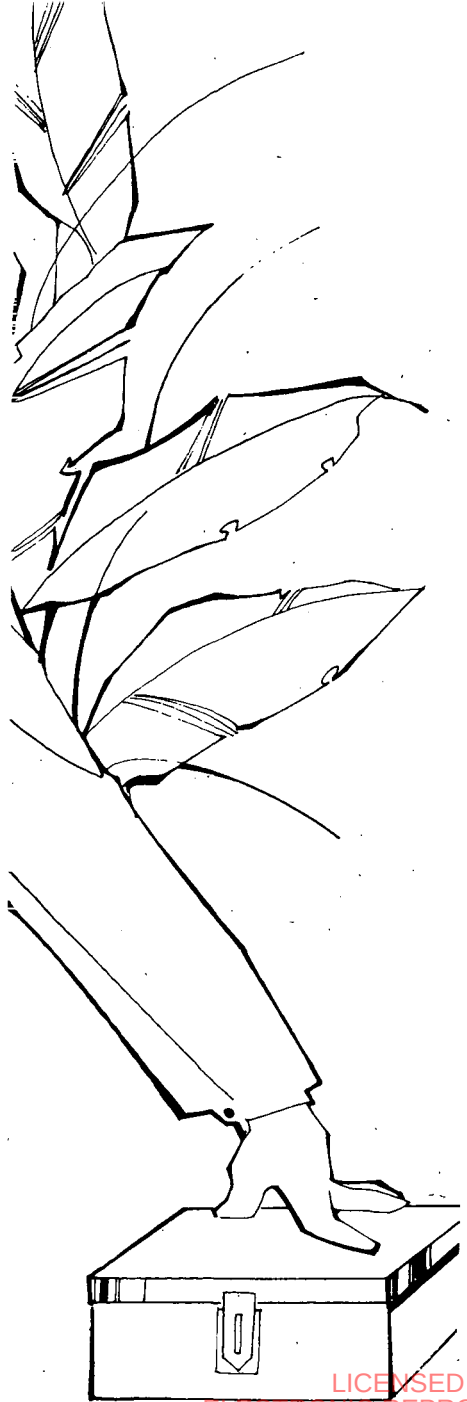

THE RED BOXES

by Leo Whitaker

The British Prime Minister massaged his forehead, trying to exorcise what promised to be a mammoth migraine. "Let's make sure I've heard this correctly," he said in a strained voice that seemed to heighten the hard spiky consonants of his Midlands accent. "This would-be defector claims that Soviet military intelligence has access to the King's dispatch boxes?"

Q nodded gravely. "He overheard it in the GRU officers' club on his last Moscow leave. Two generals were in their cups, whispering about their mole in Buckingham Palace."

"How soon can we debrief him?"

"We'll know more next month when the GRU transfers him from Budapest to Ankara. That's where he's scheduled to bolt, Prime Minister."

The tall self-made millionaire, who had taken over DI6 in the midst of the last calamity, was

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worth his weight in platinum, the Prime Minister thought. Just what the Secret Intelligence Service needed: a brilliant outsider. Q's first intelligence coup was a blow, however. The Prime Minister sat stunned for a moment, as the enormity of it sank in. Across from him, Q was pale and grim. "You realize the Russians know everything if they're into the red boxes. There isn't one important decision of this government that isn't detailed and updated for his Majesty's eyes only."

The DI6 Director murmured agreement.

The Prime Minister rose and went over to the grate to stir the fire. While the logs didn't need attending, the action helped him to collect his thoughts. The British Monarch was entitled to be informed of all state secrets, as well as the policies of his government, and this material was regularly sent to the palace in red leather boxes. "Catastrophe" was too mild a word if the GRU knew their contents, particularly in light of what the world press had dubbed *The Spy Scandal of The Century* only six months before. The nation was still reeling from that one. "What a bloody clanger," he murmured aloud.

Q swallowed visibly and replied, "I'm afraid there's more, sir." He paused and cleared his throat. "It seems his Majesty's close friend and military aide, Major Viscount Davenport Ramsgate, is our prime suspect."

The Prime Minister was staggered. "They go back to the royal nursery together, not to mention *the other*." He was referring to the IRA terrorist bomb that landed at the feet of the Queen Mother two years earlier. Major Ramsgate scooped it up. The King's boyhood friend lost an arm and an eye when it exploded.

Q said, "He has access to the King's chambers and, unfortunately, he's recently been patronizing a shirtmaker on Knightsbridge Green. Our GRU informant told us that's their newest center in London. This has been confirmed by our surveillance Johnnies."

"It couldn't just be a coincidence, I suppose?"

Q shook his head, almost imperceptibly.

"The last thing Britain needs is another intelligence scandal," the Prime Minister declared, dejectedly.

The intelligence director rolled his eyes. His predecessor, a titled retired navy captain, had disappeared six months ago in the midst of an exposure of a huge Soviet spy ring operating in the government. He surfaced in Moscow at a press conference, at which he announced that he had been recruited to Soviet espionage thirty-three years before, as a midshipman. He boasted that many of the best and brightest of his generation were ideological converts, who spied

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enthusiastically for the Soviet Union. The Americans went into orbit. The French DST and West German BND security agencies ceased all cooperation. Britain was a laughing stock. The government fell and the voters decimated the ruling party at the polls.

Through it all, the young King had become a beacon for the people. In this crisis, the monarchy emerged as the sole institution the people trusted completely. He toured the country, reminding his subjects of past glories and promising them future achievements. The magic of monarchy gave the country a morale boost it needed badly. The King enjoyed a huge popularity; it would be shattering if it became public that Soviet tentacles had penetrated even the palace.

"His Majesty will have to be informed," he said to Q. "I want you to go to the palace with me, tomorrow."

The King's personal secretary escorted them to a sumptuous antechamber. As they waited to be announced, the door to the King's office opened and Major Davenport Ramsgate emerged. With him was a short man in a worn tweed sport coat and corduroy trousers, carrying a box. The man looked out of place for the palace. Faint squeals came from the wooden box he was toting.

"Good afternoon, Prime Minister," the major boomed heartily upon seeing him. "Have a peek."

The pair approached and the man in the tweed jacket lowered the box. It contained five tiny puppies.

"Mr. MacGregor, here, is the head of the palace kennel," Major Ramsgate informed them. "The King wanted to see this litter. They're from his favorite Old English Sheepdog."

MacGregor said, with a Scottish burr, "Poor mum had a difficult delivery. The King was most concerned. But look at the wee'uns. . . aren't they brae?"

Across the room, a thin ancient man with wispy hair appeared, carrying a stack of shirts in cellophane wrappers.

Major Ramsgate winked at the Prime Minister with his one good eye. "That's Sedgewick, you know. By his look, I'm for it."

The Prime Minister recalled the King's butler had been the subject of some recent press articles. Sedgewick had served the King since he was fourteen.

Major Ramsgate met the butler in the middle of the room, not quite out of earshot.

"Major, these won't do," the aged servant said, in an imperious tone. "The collars are the wrong size for his Majesty. We would do better to patronize his Majesty's traditional shirtmaker, henceforth."

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"I've some shirts on order. I'll take them back this afternoon."

"Thank you, Major," the elderly butler said, crisply.

Q whispered in the P.M.'s ear: "He'll be delivering more than shirts, I'll wager."

The King's secretary came out and escorted them into his Majesty's study.

The King listened with equanimity as both Q and the Prime Minister described the soon-to-defect GRU officer's report on the violation of the red dispatch boxes. However, the instant Q mentioned Major Ramsgate, the King's eyes frosted.

"Prime Minister, you wish me to believe that the man who lost an arm and an eye protecting my mother is a spy?"

"We have serious indications, your Majesty."

The elegant young King arose. There were bright points of color on his cheeks. "I will not believe it. It will take more than the word of a Soviet security officer and a visit to a shirtmakers to convince me."

"Your Majesty," Q interjected, "let me implore you. Take more precautions with the dispatch boxes." He indicated the two red boxes laying on a table across the room. Both were open with their lids back.

The King strode across the rug and locked both boxes. Turning, the young Monarch gave them a withering look. "I have no doubt of your sincerity, but what you suggest is inconceivable." The King drew himself up to his full height. He was a commanding figure. "We are displeased. We are *very* displeased. Good day, gentlemen."

There was a knock. The Prime Minister put down a report he was reading. "Come in."

"The Security Director to see you, sir. Urgently," his secretary said.

"Send him in."

Q crossed the office and slumped into a chair. It appeared as if he had aged ten years in the week since they had visited the King. The Prime Minister guessed he hadn't had much sleep.

"What is so important?" he asked.

"We've found the spy in the palace and it's not Ramsgate."

The Prime Minister started. "But your GRU officer said . . ."

"No, our Russian told us that *someone* in the palace was into the red boxes. We thought, naturally, that it was the major, when he patronized the shop that was fronting for the GRU."

"Then who?" the Prime Minister exclaimed.

"Our would-be defector found out it wasn't a military officer but a Buckingham Palace servant. And that's the last our Budapest agents saw of him. He's disappeared. We think he's

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been arrested. Oh, and the custom shirtmaker in Knightsbridge Green has closed. Everyone is scattered."

"Will you—please—tell me who the spy is."

"Sedgewick, the King's butler."

The Prime Minister groaned.

Q continued, "I put tails and surveillance on every one of the palace staff. Sedgewick did a brush pass with someone on the Piccadilly tube. We arrested the contact, a Russian merchant marine officer. He had microfilm strips of all the documents in the most recent delivery of the King's dispatch boxes."

"I'll need copies of this material to show the King," the Prime Minister said, heavily.

The King studied the stack of photographs of the documents found on the Russian ship's officer. Then he put them aside and studied the ceiling, in silence, for a long time.

"Well, this would appear conclusive," he eventually said to the Prime Minister.

"I'm afraid so, your Majesty."

The King began: "This matter would rip open old wounds. The nation should be spared." He paused and gazed at the politician, assessing him. His First Minister wore a sympathetic expression. "I am going to ask the government *not* to arrest Sedgewick. In my great grandfather's time, there was the gentleman's way out. An antique custom but discreet and final."

"Hmmm, a solution that would cause a minimum of embarrassment," the Prime Minister said. He cocked an eyebrow. "Do you think your butler would be willing to choose that option?"

"You have my guarantee."

The King placed a decanter of brandy and two snifters next to the red boxes. On the top of one of the red leather cases, he laid a vial of veronal. Mr. MacGregor, the keeper of the palace kennels, had complied with his request to provide him with whatever MacGregor used to put down terminal dogs. The Highlands Scot had been visibly surprised by the request.

Sedgewick appeared in the doorway.

"Please come in," the King said, "and close the door."

He led his old servant over to a huge leather easy chair. The King sat on a footstool at his feet. "You remember that day, when I was fourteen, when you explained it all to me?" the King asked, fervently.

Sedgewick's eyes swiveled to the red leather dispatch boxes and the vial of clear liquid he saw on top of one.

The King saw that the old butler comprehended.

"We knew this day would come," Sedgewick said in a reedy voice.

"Yes," the King agreed, sadly.

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"But think of the whole new world you opened up to me . . . it was like being reborn. Dialectical materialism. The class struggle. Especially the part about being in the vanguard of history."

"I've had a good run," Sedgewick said, rising from the easy chair. He limped over to the red boxes and pocketed the vial of veronal. "Mr. MacGregor will be your contact with our Russian friends from now on."

"I'll miss you, comrade," the King responded, his eyes misting.

"One last toast, Sir."

"Of course."

The Monarch poured brandy into the snifters.

"Red flags over London," they each repeated as they clinked glasses. ■

Did you know...

An autographed, bound copy of the unpublished memoirs of the late Captain Eric Curwain has been presented to the Library of the Royal Canadian Institute in Toronto. The manuscript, entitled "Memoirs Of An Espionage Agent," is interesting both as a personal account of experiences in clandestine warfare and as an inside view of espionage activities in the Second World War. One is struck by the apparent casualness with which the British Secret Intelligence Service carried out its role. Curwain, himself, tells how he literally strolled in off the street in 1933 and applied to join the SIS.

Curwain was an Englishman who served as a wireless operator in the Royal Flying Corps in World War I. This experience led him into work as a radio-man for SIS in a number of European countries. Through his eyes, we learn at first hand about the fall of Poland, and of double-dealing in Balkan capitals.

On the outbreak of WW2, he and his fellow civilian radio agents were blandly told that they would henceforth hold the rank of sergeant in the Army. This, he felt, was a ploy to obtain their services cheap. He subsequently obtained a commission by simply demanding one, though he seldom wore a uniform throughout his service.

He served for some time in the United States and Canada, mainly for Sir William Stevenson's British Security Co-Ordination, based in New York City. Curwain spent a while in Toronto, recruiting immigrants to serve as agents in Jugoslavia and elsewhere. He also had much to do with agent-training at the famous Camp X near Oshawa, Ontario.

Settling in Toronto after the war, he married a lady who had been a cipher expert for Allied intelligence. He became a quiet authority on secret warfare, and was an important research contributor to several authors of books on intelligence and subversion. Captain Curwain died in January, 1983, and has left a legacy of insight through his manuscript. Aficionados of espionage would enjoy browsing through Eric Curwain's memoirs, which may be studied at the Royal Canadian Military Institute.

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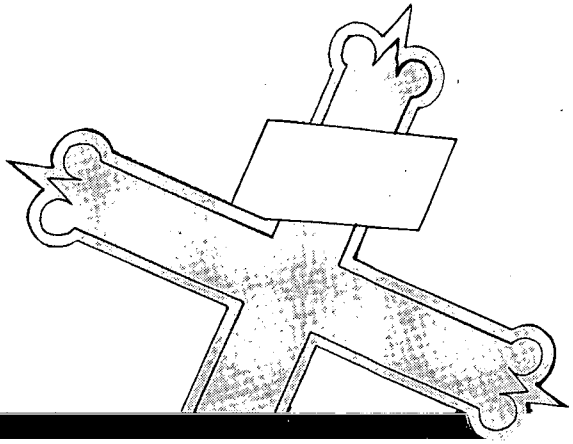

Churchkill

by Chuck Meyer

Friday night on 6th Street was colder than usual for Austin nightlife. Still, the steady crowds were there filling the narrow sidewalks and spilling couples out into the busy street. Jeans and boots jostled minks and pinstripes; flower vendors hawked and bums begged; loud music mixed with strange aromas of food and smoke and people. The slow, stable blue and white cruised the street looking and not looking. It was a normal Friday night. So it seemed.

One couple, youngish, stylish, mufflers thrown around their faces against the wind, walked hurriedly, arms around each other's waist, hands securely gloved, off 6th Street and north two blocks toward their car. Ignoring them as unsuspect, the police car passed by, and as it did, the couple slid silently into the darkness of the lot behind St. Margaret's Episcopal Church.

Quickly finding the rear entrance, the man unscrewed the light above the door while the woman, working through several keys, finally turned the lock. In minutes, they had made their way into the sacristy, the small room adjacent to the high altar, where all the precious trappings of the church were stored.

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With intricate timing, they set about their work, cracking locks, opening drawers, taking small jewel-encrusted objects that would fit in pockets, strapping larger pieces to the inside of their coats. Their task complete, the two moved stealthily back to the church entrance. The woman pulled the door closed as the man turned the old bulb tightly into its rusted socket.

Rounding the corner, the blue and white rolled past the young, stylish couple hurriedly getting into their car against the cold of the night. The deadly plan had begun.

Morning sunshine careened through the spotless windows of the rector's office as Lucas Holt slammed down the phone on his desk.

"Dammit, Maxine," he yelled, "I'm going to cancel this whole friggin' service if that lame-brained excuse for a governor calls with one more of his 'requests.'"

"Now what?" came the tired voice from the outer office.

"It's not enough," he said as he walked out to her desk, "it's not enough that that idiot wants to kick off his inauguration day with a communion service here. . . "

His face got red and blotchy. ". . .and he wants to have it covered by national news cameras. . . "

He gestured with his arms. ". . .but now, NOW he has the audacity to have his chief flunky call and 're-QUEST' that we shorten the whole service so it won't TAKE so long and BORE people."

The Reverend Lucas Holt glared at his grey haired secretary. "I'd like to bore that one-term-fat-cat right out his old. . . "

"Hey, Rev, what's happenin'?" The voice from the doorway behind him belonged to Nikky Dorati, an ex-con from Lucas Holt's years as prison chaplain.

Maxine rolled her eyes to the ceiling. "Well, look what the cat dragged in."

"Hey, Max-baby," Nikky said as he shook the Rev's hand and half sat on the slow talking secretary's desk. ". . . how's about you and me takin' in dinner and a flick some night?"

"I wouldn't be caught dead with you, Nikky," she drawled. "Or maybe I would. . . "

"Enough you two," Lucas Holt broke in. "Nikky, I need to talk to you about something in my office. Max, if there are any more calls from Governor Megabuck's staff, tell them I'm in Dallas and can't be reached till Tuesday."

The two men walking into the office were a study in contrasts. Lucas Holt, sandy haired and blue-eyed, held his 5'11" frame erect and balanced. At 37, he ran three times a week around Town Lake, watched his health food diet and yelled at his secretary to control his stress. The 41 year old Dorati, his dark hair greasy and his 5'2" frame stooped, survived on coffee, sugar and pasta. At the prison, he

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had been known as the "Mafia Midget." He hated the name. Lucas Holt shut the door.

"What's going on here, Rev? I had to go through three I.D.s and a jock check to get in the back door of this place. Are you holdin' God hostage or somethin'?"

"Close but no cigar, Nik." He planted himself in a chair. "Pour yourself some coffee and sit down."

"Don't mind if I do."

"The Governor is coming here in an hour, with his entire cabinet, to begin their Inaugural Day with communion at St. Margaret's. I guess so we can all see how religious and sincere he is."

"They don't drag out the feds for no governor, Rev. I been frisked by 'em all and I know a fed from a local cop. Besides the shiny suit, ear plug and deadpan face, a fed's just got different *hands*. No, Rev, I'd say you got bigger company than the Gov comin' to chow here."

Lucas Holt smiled. "Very good, Nikky. Very good indeed. And who do you think it is?"

Dorati sipped his coffee. "Street talk has it the Veep or the State Department honcho. But my contacts at the airport say it's the Big Boy himself."

"Right again, Nik. The President needs to carry Texas if he's going to win the next election. He's trying to mend some fences with the Governor by coming here. The problem is, if *you* know it then probably some other people know it, too. Add that to the serious threats on his life lately and you get the three sets of agents outside."

"If that's why you called me here, Rev, I ain't heard nothin' about that. Nobody I know would want to take the President off the count, no matter how bad he is."

"No. That's not why I called. I've got another question for you."

Nikky Dorati leaned forward on the couch. "Sorry, Rev, I checked that one out, too."

"What one?"

"The one about who ripped off your church last night."

"How did you know that? I reported that directly to the sheriff himself this morning and told him to keep it under wraps."

"Simple, Rev. The trusty cleanin' the sheriff's office when you called passed the word to a skid gettin' out on bond and told him to have me check into it. You got some friends in the street, man, for what you did for us in the joint. We wanted to find out who did it and, uh, make sure it didn't happen again."

Lucas Holt smiled, then frowned. "That's very gratifying, Nikky, but you really should leave that stuff up to the police."

"Yeah, sure, Rev. Anything you say." Nikky poured himself another cup of the hot black liquid. "But let me tell you something weird."

"What's that?"

"I couldn't find out nothin' about it."

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"YOU couldn't find out anything?"

"That's right, Rev. I even checked the fences for the gold and silver they took and it ain't turned up yet. You don't hold onto that stuff forever, either. You turn it over before descriptions hit the paper and pawn sheets."

"There's something even stranger than that, Nikky."

"It sure is."

"How did you . . . let me guess. The trusty told the skid who told you . . ."

". . . that they stole everything they could carry without bulging out of their coats. They opened all the drawers, ransacked the place for valuables and cracked all the locked cabinets open—except for one. They left the holy wafers locked in a solid gold box untouched."

"Which means they have to be Catholic, Nikky."

"What?"

"Episcopalians aren't taught that well. Only a Catholic would leave the Body of Christ untouched, no matter how valuable its container was."

"So I'll go look for an out-of-town Catholic. If it was local, I'd know about it." Nikky Dorati ran his hand through his greasy hair. "It still don't figure, Rev. Why would they take everything and leave. . ."

His conversation was abruptly ended by the sound of a flustered Maxine protesting loudly.

"Y'all cain't go in there. I don't care *who* you are. Father Holt's in conference and cain't be. . ."

"Hello, Lucas." A short, obese creature, Governor Horace Blumeson, puffed his way through the open door with his hand outstretched. "I know it's been a long time since I've been in this building but the wife and I *are* members, you know; long time *sustaining* members, I might add. Even served on a committee or two in my younger days."

"Hello, Governor Blumeson," Lucas Holt said, eyeing the entourage pouring into the space behind the loquacious man with the cigar. "Would you put that thing out before my plants suffocate, Governor?"

"Ah, still the old kidder, huh? Oh . . . well, certainly." He handed the soggy black object to an aide who left abruptly. The crowd of people then parted like the Red Sea as a tall man, graying at the temples a little too dramatically, loped into the room.

"I want you to meet an old friend of mine, Lucas. He just got in on Air Force One." Horace Blumeson smiled broadly and patted the man on the shoulder. "This is Lawrence Crain. Mr. President, this is Lucas Holt."

"Pleased to meet you, Fr. Holt. I've heard a lot about you. You have quite a reputation in our prison system, you know."

"I did a lot of time there, Mr. President."

"Yeah, I did, too," Nikky Dorati elbowed his way through the

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crowd. "Pleased to make your acquaintance, I'm sure." He extended his grimy hand and Lawrence Crain, with the grace of a practiced politician, responded.

"Mr. President, my friend and unofficial bodyguard at the prison, Nikky Dorati."

"Nice meeting you, Mr. Dorati. Are you the one that ran the. . . what did they call it, Governor?"

"I believe it was the, uh, the 'God Squad,' wasn't it, Lucas?"

"I'd rather not talk about. . ."

"That's right, Mr. President," Nikky Dorati said. "It was the God Squad and I ran it. You see, there was a bunch of us inmates that sorta watched out for the Rev here, if you know what I mean. I mean, there was some cons and some hacks who didn't like him rockin' their boat, so the boys and I. . ."

"Excuse me," Governor Blumeson interrupted, "but we really don't have time for that right now." Nikky Dorati frowned at him. "In fact, the reason we came early is to see if you could do the service right away. The security people tell us it's better if we shift the schedule somewhat, considering some of the attempts on Larry's, I mean the President's life."

Lucas Holt felt his blood pressure rising. Horace Blumeson was throwing his considerable weight around, performing for the President. Lawrence Crain was there not out of friendship but to garner political clout and Texan votes in the election. The Rev decided the sooner they got started the sooner they would be out of his church, entourage and all. He took a deep breath.

"Certainly, Horace. It'll just take me ten minutes to get the altar set up and my vestments on. Of course the news media might not be. . ."

"Already told 'em, Lucas. I knew you'd cooperate. I even got all my Cabinet sitting out there, ready to go."

The President looked a bit pained. "Thank you for the inconvenience, Fr. Holt. If you're ever in Washington. . ."

"I'll be sure to stop in." Lucas Holt smiled.

"Yeah, me, too." Nikky Dorati extended his hand once again.

Maxine stepped into the room. "He said 'stop in,' not 'break in.'

"Fr. Holt," she drawled, "I had the altar guild set things up ahead of time when I saw these people arrive early. They're waiting for you."

The roomful of people disgorged in the direction of the sanctuary. Lucas Holt disappeared into the now disheveled sacristy room adjacent to the altar. Nikky Dorati, waiting until the office was empty, made sure Maxine was away from her desk. He closed the door, picked up the phone and dialed a number. He spoke two words—"Plan B"—and hung up.

Lucas Holt stood behind the old stone altar facing the congregation. The women

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of the guild had set the holy table with a chalice borrowed from the Catholic church across the street. It didn't match the gold box or the borrowed cruets of water and wine but he was sure no one would notice on the nightly news.

This is an incredible sight, he thought, as he scanned the front pews. The entire cabinet of the State of Texas was flanked by the governor right of center and the President left of center. Appropriate political seating, he mused.

At least it might be a chance to influence these leaders by something in the service, by the act of communion, by something he might say offhand. No. Cut the rationalizing. It was a political showcase and he was a willing participant. Well, at least he would do the service with as much dignity as possible.

"Almighty God," he began, "unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hid . . ." He wondered, as he read, how many secrets were present in that church, secrets that could make and break careers, futures, and lives? Out of the corner of his eye he caught someone pushing his way into the last pew in the back. What was Nikky doing here? He never went to church. Even in the prison, he'd wait outside till the service was over, to talk.

Kneeling now to lead the confession, Lucas Holt looked up at the elements on the altar. He kind of liked their not matching. It was more symbolic of the way the world really was. It was symbolic of the way the morning had gone. Nothing matched. The sacristy had been robbed and ransacked, but this gold box was left. Two unlikely politicians were sitting together. The service had started at an unscheduled time. Nikky Dorati was sitting in church.

Nothing matched. Or did it? Something was trying hard to come into his consciousness. Something deep inside was beginning to place pieces of an unrelated puzzle together. Lucas Holt could not identify the picture, but he could, suddenly, identify the feeling. A chill ran down his back as he gave absolution. The feeling was fear.

The organ played interminably while Lucas Holt prepared the altar and received the collection. He saw Horace Blumeson frown and glance from his watch to the altar. The service was taking too long. That's okay. It served them right. Besides, it was time for the communion, now, anyway. Just ten more minutes and it would all be over. All over.

Raising the cup and the plate of wafers to the congregation, Lucas Holt intoned: "The gifts of God for the people of God." He turned around to take the Body of Christ as the dignitaries filed up to the altar rail and knelt behind him. It was then that he saw the note.

Sitting on the top of the collection basin was a half-opened slip

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of paper. The handwriting was distinctly familiar. It was Nikky Dorati's. Before reaching for the wafer, he pulled the basin over in front of him and bowed his head. To the congregation, who saw only his back, he appeared to be in prayer.

He opened the note and read:

Not a bad haul, Rev. What say we split this bread and head for Vegas for a week!
NIKKY

He smiled, put the note under a book, and started to put the wafer into his mouth. Then, all of a sudden, the pieces of the puzzle flashed into a conscious picture. And he knew. Nikky's slang word for the money had made the connection. It was the *bread.*

He slowly put the wafer down as his mind raced through the scene. The robbery the night before had been merely a cover for the real crime. The gold box containing the sacrament had not been taken for a reason. The box had indeed been opened, the contents sprayed or dusted with a deadly chemical, not enough to disturb the wafers but enough to coat each one with a lethal dose. The box was then wiped clean of prints and carefully replaced. In one brilliant swoop, the killers would destroy the entire government of a major state and, with the President murdered, throw the leadership of the country into turmoil with the election only weeks away.

He knew he had to put a stop to the service. But maybe not, maybe the "robbers" had not found the can of extra wafers hidden in a cabinet in the sacristy for emergencies. He would make some excuse and slip out the side door to the adjoining room.

He glanced toward the sacristy door and wondered when the women of the altar guild had started carrying silencers as part of their equipment. Through the crack by the hinge, he saw the outline of the gun held by a well-dressed woman wearing white gloves. She must have gotten in with the altar guild team by lying about being new or substituting for someone. She was poised and ready.

The killers had carefully placed a back-up capable of taking out at least three of the people kneeling behind him. With their heads bowed, they would never know what hit them. It was his choice which way they would die: silently, with the poison from the communion wafers, or violently, with a flurry of silent spits from the sacristy door.

Which way would be better? Which way might fewer lives be lost? Was there another alternative? What could he do to. . . Lucas Holt looked down at the pile of wafers on the plate in front of him. Then he smiled as he took a deep breath, threw back his head, brought it forward aiming directly at the plate and let out a huge "AAAAACCCCCHHHHH—

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OOOOOOOOOO!"

Wafers flew in all directions off the plate, over the altar and onto the wooden floor. Simultaneously, all the bowed heads looked up first at an embarrassed priest blowing his nose on national television and then at the noise of the sacristy door slamming shut.

Horace Blumeson whispered, hopefully out of range of the microphones: "What the hell is going on here, Lucas?"

From behind the door came sounds of muffled spits and breaking glass, the thud of bodies slamming against walls.

"Just an altar guild meeting, Horace. Women of the church, you know." Lucas Holt replied, stooping over to pick up the wafers. He motioned to the organist to keep playing some droning number as he announced: "There will be a short delay while I get a new supply of wafers."

"Those are okay, Lucas," Blumeson growled. "Let's get this thing over with." He reached over the rail and picked up a wafer.

"Shut up, Tubby," Lucas Holt growled back. "I just saved your worthless hide. And I ought to let you have one of these." He grabbed the wafer out of the Governor's hand.

As he stood up, the sacristy door opened and a small person in a hooded acolyte robe came out with two packages of communion wafers. He walked to the altar and handed them to the waiting Lucas Holt.

"Try these, Rev," Nikky Dorati said, winking. Beneath the hood his face was bruised and cut. "I know they ain't poisoned 'cause I fed some to the broad with the gun. I'll catch you later." He turned and walked away.

Lucas Holt lifted the new wafers in front of him and pronounced: "The Body of Christ." He turned and put one in his mouth.

The waiter with the pony tail and earring brought two bottles of Shiner Bock to their table in the New Earth Restaurant by the University.

"I don't know why you like this place, Rev. You can't smoke, you can't get no meat, and you can't tell who the waitresses are."

"When *you* pay the bill, *you* name the place, Nikky. Now just pass me the chips and hot sauce." Lucas Holt poured the brown foamy beer into the small glass. "And answer me one question."

"What's that, Rev?"

"How did you know what was going on?"

"I didn't, Rev, at least not at first. When my connections told me the President was coming, I guessed there'd be an attempt on his or somebody's life on the way out of the building. It was too open not to try it. So the boys and I had planned to take care of that even before I talked to you this morning. We didn't want your church gettin' a bad name or nothin', ya know."

"Thanks."

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"Don't mention it. So we were ready for an outside hit, probably by rifle. When the show started early, I had to go to Plan B."

"Which was what?"

"Which was to get the God Squad in even closer and not to just look for a gun. Somethin' didn't feel right, Rev. It was too safe in there. It got me nervous.

"Then I saw you lower your hands without eatin' the wafer and I figured somethin' was screwy. That's when I busted my butt gettin' to the sacristy. I knew, uh, from experience it had to be an inside hit and that room was the only place the person could get a clear shot from. I didn't know about the poison till I got there."

"Well, I owe you another 'thank you' for helping out again," Lucas Holt said almost reluctantly. "And thank the boys when you see them. You saved a lot more than a few lives today."

"Don't go gettin' too thankful, Rev." Nikky Dorati lowered his voice and huddled over the table. "To tell you the truth, I was thinkin' about offin' that idiot Blumeson with the chick's gun, but . . ."

"NIKKY!" Lucas Holt stopped him. "Talk like that will get you twenty-five to life around here."

"Of course I was just jokin', Rev." Dorati washed down a nacho with his beer. "It was all I could do to get the gun away from her. The dame could fight."

Lucas Holt nodded at the bandages on Dorati's face. "I see she could. And I'll bet she knows how not to talk, too."

"Right, Rev. She wouldn't open her cute little yap even if they drugged her—assuming she stays alive that long. This was a top notch operation. Took a lot of planning. Maybe KGB. Maybe terrorist. Who knows, Rev?" Nikky Dorati grinned. "Maybe it was his mother-in-law."

The waiter returned to take their order. "Excuse me," he said, "but aren't you the priest who was on t.v. tonight, blowing his nose all over the President and everybody?"

"Omigawd. I didn't know that was on television." Lucas Holt looked dejectedly down at the menu.

"National news, Rev. You looked great. Even your bishop thought so."

"My bishop?"

"Yeah," Nikky Dorati handed him a rumpled telegram. "This came for you while Maxine was out powderin' her nose."

Lucas Holt opened the envelope.

"It says . . ."

"I know what it says, Rev. This is Nikky, remember? So what does 'desecration' mean?"

"It means he doesn't have a sense of humor and thinks I shouldn't have one either."

Nikky Dorati grinned. "In that case, waiter—and I assume you are a waiter—we'll have a pitcher of margueritas. And go easy on the lime." ■

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BETRAYAL

by
K.L. Jones

It was a small dingy hotel room and it could have been anywhere. The fact that it was in Rome was insignificant. Its proximity to the American Embassy did have some importance, the room was a place of refuge, a hiding place. It was what some spy novelists might call a safe-house.

I was the reason it was safe.

I had a .38 on the table next to me. The room only had one door and I sat in a chair facing that door with my hand on the gun. The man I was guarding was stretched out on the bed. He was about two hundred and fifty pounds of flesh. He looked like a man who might have actually worked at one time in his life, but if he had, it was a long time ago. He lay there dressed in a pair of faded black pants and a torn sleeveless t-shirt. His shoes and socks were stuffed under the room's other chair, which was near the bed. The shirt he'd worn into the room, a white formless tent, hung from the back of the chair.

It was hot in that room and he was sweating.

I was just waiting.

I didn't know his name. I'd been told it was Andre, but I knew that wasn't right. It didn't matter. Andre, or whoever he was, reached for the pack of cigarettes on the chair by the bed. He lit up.

"I am worried," Andre said. "It is taking too long."

His accent was thick, eastern European. I looked at my watch. We'd been in the room three hours.

"You hungry?" I asked.

"No," he said. "I am worried. My children, my family. Everyone must be saved."

"They'll be okay." I said. "We'll get your family out."

He didn't seem to take my reassurance very well. He pulled a grey handkerchief that used to be white from his pants pocket and wiped the sweat from his brow.

I wasn't worried, but it wasn't because I had confidence that we'd get his family. I wasn't worried because there wasn't anything I could do. As far as I knew, his family could be two thousand

Illustration by Bruce Bauer
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miles away, somewhere in the Soviet Union. The agents assigned to pick them up either would do it or not.

The deal we had with Andre was simple: He was ready and willing to defect, but he wanted his family out. I had no idea why he was important to us, but it wasn't my job to figure that out. All I had to do was hold his hand until we got the word. Either his family was safe—or it wasn't. I'd probably get to break the news to him and, if it was *go,* we'd have another low level defector.

I watched him puff on the cigarette. It was American, and the way he smoked convinced me that, given the chance, he'd have defected a long time ago. This must have been his first trip to the West. Some kind of trade delegation, I thought.

The man rolled into a sitting position and, after grinding his cigarette out in the ashtray, pulled something from his back pocket. It was a billfold. He opened it and stared at something. Slowly, he struggled to get up. The task was made harder because he didn't take his eyes off whatever it was he was staring at. I thought I knew what it was, and a second later, when he showed it to me, I smiled because I'd been right.

"Is my family," Andre said.

I looked at the open wallet. There were two photos encased in clear plastic. The one showed a matronly plump woman of about the same age as my guest. With her were two boys, apparently in their teens. The other photo was of a pretty young woman, maybe 25 years old. She had a nice smile.

Andre's daughter.

"Very nice," I said.

"Yes." Andre nodded. "I miss them. Especially. . ." He put his finger on the young woman's photograph.

I nodded, too. There was no need for him to have stated the obvious. If he didn't miss his family, I wouldn't be sitting in this stuffy hotel room with him.

"Your daughter?" I asked.

"My Katrina," he said.

He looked from the photo to me. I thought he was going to say something more but he didn't. Instead, he shrugged and went back to the bed. I looked at my watch. It was getting late. I began to feel that something had gone wrong. If it had gone off right, we would have heard by now.

Andre, back on the bed, removed the young woman's photograph from the wallet. He was still holding it when the phone rang.

I picked up the receiver.

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"No go," the voice on the other end said. "We couldn't get to the wife." Suddenly, I hated my job. I looked toward the anxious man on the bed. I shook my head and saw the color drain from Andre's face.

"You'll have a visitor in about five minutes," the voice continued, "somebody who will try and reason with Andre. He may not be expecting her, but he'll be glad to see her. When she gets there, consider yourself relieved."

"Okay," I said. I put the receiver down.

The man was up and looking at me. He already knew what I was going to say, but that didn't make it any easier.

"It didn't work," I said. "Sorry. We couldn't get to your family."

Andre said nothing. He sat back down on the bed and buried his face in his hands.

"I'll be leaving you in a few minutes," I went on. "Someone will be coming to talk to you."

He didn't look up.

There was nothing more I could say. I stood up and put my gun in the holster I wore on the inside of my left calf. Before I was through, there was a gentle knock on the door. I moved to open it.

In the hall was a man I knew as Brody. With him, looking as if she had stepped right out of Andre's wallet, was Katrina. I stood aside to let her in.

"Leave them," Brody said. I walked out of the room as Brody closed the door. "I think we've got him, now."

Brody and I moved toward the stairs at the far end of the corridor. "You think the daughter will be enough to keep him here?"

Brody laughed. "What makes you think that's his daughter?"

I didn't say anything.

"She's the key to this whole thing. Your friend Andre was playing it straight all the time. He agreed to defect, if we could get his family out, but that lady's the reason he *will* defect. We got her out a couple of days ago. And with her here, Andre'll stay."

I paused at the stairs as Brody leaned against the wall. He turned to look at the closed door it was now his turn to guard.

"Did we even try to get to his family?" I asked.

Brody gave me a look that indicated he thought I was terribly naive to be doing this kind of work. He smiled, showing one gold-capped front tooth. "Maybe, maybe not," he said. "But Andre thinks we did and that's enough to make Andre feel he did everything he could to help his wife and the kids. He might feel terrible for a while, but he does have Miss Consolation. And believe me, she's all he really wants. Whether he knows it or not." ■

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Trouble In TINSELTOWN

by William Schoell

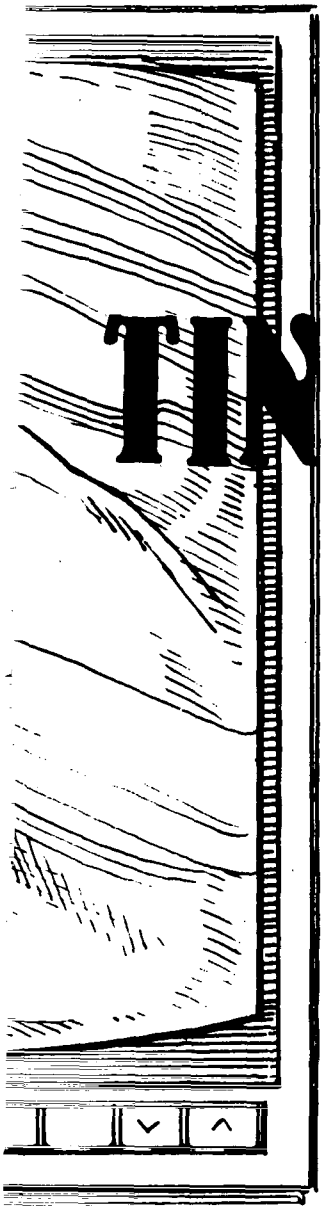

Illustration by Adragna

A scream rang out from down the hall.

"My God. My *God!* It's all in here. They've got it all. *Every last bit of it!*"

John Morton, head writer for the TV show *Tinseltown,* raced down the corridor and entered his executive producer's office. "Barry! What's the matter?"

Barry Lombard shoved the paper in front of Morton's face. "Look, John. Look for yourself!"

It was the latest copy of the *Weekly Scrutinizer,* the racy tabloid that featured real and imagined gossip about the roman-

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tic and sexual lifestyles of movie stars and politicians—with a recipe or two thrown in as filler. Morton inhaled sharply as he read the headline. "Secrets of *Tinseltown*—read what will be happening tomorrow on the hot nighttime soap *today!*"

Trembling, Morton opened the paper to the inside story. He muttered while he read: "Drake sues Willoma for palimony. . . Jessica loses the baby. . . Sam has another attack of kleptomania. Barry, they've got it all!"

Lombard threw up his hands and leaned back in his chair behind his solid oak desk. "Just about. Even the bit where Lonnie's father gets a sex change and marries his own son."

"We're ruined. We'll have to start all over."

"Not before we plug up the leak, we don't."

John began to protest. "I've told you a hundred times, my staff is clean! They have too much at stake to bite the hand that feeds them, and—"

Lombard waved his hand in dismissal. "No, John, no. I know neither you nor any of the writers are responsible. But I do have a number one suspect."

"N—not Natalia?"

Lombard nodded vigorously. "You guessed it. She's been squawking for months now. Never misses a chance to knock the show. And she's always hanging around the offices waiting to see me. A pest and a liar. And maybe a vindictive woman."

Morton chose his words with great care. "I—I know you've had your troubles with Natalia, Barry. She's all you ever talk about. But that doesn't mean she's out to undermine the program."

"Oh yeah? Well, she'd like nothing better than for *Tinseltown* to go off the air. She's stuck with her lousy contract for the rest of the season, but would rather devote her time to the *theatuh.* Hrmmph. This show made her a star but all she talks about is going back to the *boards* and *Ibsen.*"

"Do you have any proof?"

Barry was disgruntled. "No, damn it. But I'm sure I could trap the witch if I just had a plan."

"How could she possibly have done it, Barry? How could anyone have done it?" Then Morton smacked his forehead with his palm. "Wait a minute! Maybe my cousin Paul can help us out."

"Cousin Paul?"

"Yeah. Paul Burroughs. He's a private investigator."

Paul Burroughs was a handsome six footer with blond hair, blue eyes and a trim, athletic build. Although he was pushing 40, he could pass for 22. It was the unlined, almost supernaturally youthful face that did it. Some people even called him "Baby Face" Burroughs. Luckily, there was a gruffness to the eyes and mouth, a firmness to the chin and nose, that prevented him from being too pretty.

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Burroughs sat down in the chair that cousin John had offered him and stared across the desk at his prospective employer, producer Barry Lombard. Lombard was a thin, nervous gentleman of fifty, with a receding hairline and tiny gray eyes: John Morton, in contrast, was a big, beaming, overstuffed five-foot-ten inches of peace and fortitude.

Lombard, in the meantime, was looking at Burroughs with a rather aghast expression. "Uh, I was expecting somebody a little older."

For the zillionth time, Burroughs explained how he was older than he looked, mentioned his "military experience," his years of "training . . ." People could understand how a person could look older than they were, *but so much younger!* He never bothered clueing them in. "We're both at a disadvantage," he told Lombard. "My cases usually involve industrial espionage; in fact, that's my specialty. I don't normally deal with"—his face crinkled in distaste—"soap operas and temperamental TV stars."

Lombard threw the ball back into Burroughs' court.

"Now look, young man, *Tinseltown* is not just a soap opera; it's a goddamned way of life for an awful lot of people. We employ dozens of actors, hundreds of technicians and staff; we command huge advertising rates on network television. There's as much money riding on this program as there is on the yoyo inventors and plagiarized pastry chefs you normally deal with. 'Industrial espionage,' bah!"

Burroughs tugged at his collar with discomfort. Not only had his cousin told him what Lombard's problem was, he'd also given Lombard the true dope about Burroughs' career. He had to admit it; most of his cases ***had been*** penny ante, except for a few which had dealt with electronics or munitions firms—but he did make a respectable living, nonetheless.

"Okay, Mr. Lombard, I apologize. Just what is it I can do for you?"

Lombard relaxed, lit a cigarette. "Here's the story: Someone stole our plot outlines for the second half of the season and sold 'em to a tabloid." He held up the *Scrutinizer.* "All our storylines down the drain. See, if people know what's gonna happen, they won't tune in. Result: Our ratings go down, advertising rates decrease, the program is smashed by the competition—which can take steps to counteract our planning—then the show is canceled and a whole lot of people are out of work."

"Was something, some piece of paper, actually stolen? Or just the basic ideas?"

Morton cut in. "There are two copies of the storyline summaries and both are still in our possession. I have one and Barry has the other. The writers have to look at our copies if they need to refer to them."

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"They're locked up in a safe here at the studio when not in use," Lombard added. "And only I have the combination. *All* of the notes made while in the process of writing the summaries are immediately shredded."

Burroughs rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Then someone must have simply looked at the outline and remembered what it entailed."

"Impossible," Lombard said. "There are five, single-spaced, typewritten pages. The story in the *Scrutinizer* was much too detailed. No one could have remembered all that information . . . so many notes and subplots . . . all of which were disclosed in that wretched article."

"Then, as I see it, there are three possibilities," Burroughs insisted. "Someone in the company has a photographic memory. Or there's another copy of the outline"—the two men shook their heads—"or someone else has access to your safe." Again they shook their heads. "Okay, the only other possibility is that the outline was removed—for a short time only—and xeroxed. Do you have a copy machine on the premises?"

Morton nodded. "Yes, down the hall in a supply room. We use it to run off individual shooting scripts for the cast."

"Could someone have temporarily taken one of the copies without your knowledge, before they were locked away?"

Neither man rushed to deny it. "People are always milling about," Morton explained. "Conceivably, one of the copies could have been 'borrowed' while we were away from our desks during the day."

"I'm innocent, no matter what Lombard or that fat stooge of his tells you."

"We set up our production office adjacent to the studio to facilitate things," Lombard explained. "Very few crew members come in. The actors do, to discuss things. Beside myself and John here, there are five writers, a producer, an associate producer, two co-producers, an executive story editor and an assistant story editor." He looked at the head writer. "Did I leave anyone out?"

"Heavens, how should I know? I still can't keep all those people straight."

"Just what do all of them do?" Burroughs asked.

"Mostly drink coffee," Morton muttered.

"There's something wrong with

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your xerox theory," the chubby man told his cousin, while pacing around the room. "You see, everyone is searched before they leave the building. And it's a very intensive search. Barry and I have been absolutely terrified that one of the papers would get hold of our secret storylines; all that work down the drain. Bags are checked, clothes are checked, our security guards—one male, one female—even frisk everyone as they leave. There's no way any illicit papers could get out of here without them knowing it. That's probably why we were so careless about leaving them lying around in the first place."

Burroughs shook his head. "Someone must have a photographic memory then."

"Go talk to Natalia Winters," Lombard suddenly hollered, jumping out of his seat. "If she isn't the spy in the ointment, my name isn't Barry Lombard. Go, Mr. Burroughs! Grill her! Find out how she does it and stop her from doing it again!"

Natalia Winters was as beautiful off-screen as she was on. She was a statuesque lady with long black hair and a prominent bosom. She, too, looked many years younger than she was, but her youthful appearance was due more to a ton of make-up than to any good living or exercise.

She led Burroughs over to the couch and offered him a drink. "Are you sure you're old enough to drink?" she asked him, smiling.

He grimaced. "I'm old enough for lots of things."

She appraised him admiringly. "I should hope so."

It was her day off. She was all done up in a weird, if attractive, outfit of silk and feathers. Her clothes matched the decor of her apartment, which was also odd but colorful. Handing him a martini, she sat down beside him and took a tentative sip of her own. From the way she was wobbling, it was not her first drink of the day. "Now what can I do for you, my handsome young man?"

While he told her what he was doing there, he played with a copy of a script laying on the coffee table. Natalia's eyes were fastened on his hands. When he was through, she put her drink down and shook her head. "I expected as much. Those fools. Why must they harass me this way? Don't I do a good enough job for them at the studio? *Tinseltown* is number one in the ratings and everybody *says* it's because of me."

She lit a cigarette. "What would I have to gain by selling trade secrets? I'm already a millionairess. I have more money than I can spend. Why would I even sully my hands by dealing with that dirty rag of a paper?"

Burroughs surmised that she was so caught up in playing Edwina Dunn—in spite of her protestations to the contrary—that she even essayed the role when she

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wasn't filming. "It's been said that you'd like to leave the show—before your contract is up."

"Oh, I see. They think I want to destroy *Tinseltown,* so I can be done with it. How senseless. They, of all people, should know that the network is committed to the series throughout the rest of the year. I'm stuck with it whether I like it or not."

"Well, then, there is such a thing as revenge."

Natalia pshawed. "Leave that sort of thing to dear 'Edwina.' Why would I be bothered?" She picked up the script from the coffee table and shook it disparagingly. "Not that I'd mind if the show did fold. Do you ever watch it; did you ever read one of these scripts?"

Burroughs tried to grab it, but she pulled it away from him so fast he nearly got a paper cut. "Nevermind," Natalia warned. "See, they say I'm disloyal, a traitor in the fold, but you can tell them I'm so careful I won't even let you look at a story that'll go on the air in only a month or so."

She put down her cigarette and picked up her drink. Between swallows, she said, "Imagine. I'm a trained stage actress. I've done Pinter, Ibsen, Tennesee Williams, Chekov, and O'Neill. No one-dimensional characters; no hollow melodramatic confrontations there, that's for sure. Now I'm just a 'superbitch'. That's right, a silly, bubble-brained clotheshorse competing with a bunch of equally silly actresses for the title of 'superbitch.' Look at this:" She grabbed a magazine from a pile on the floor and opened it to a page which was folded over. Burroughs read the headline: ***Battle of the Superbitches. Who will be the reigning wicked queen of the nighttime serials?*** There was a picture of Natalia, as Edwina Courtley Dunn— menacingly holding a whiskey bottle by the neck above a baby's carriage—and several other, equally beautiful, aloof and threatening women.

"Years learning my craft with the Actor's Studio," she sobbed. "On tour as Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire,* with Maureen Stapleton as Stella. Appearing on the London stage with Lord Laurence Olivier. Only to wind up as a . . . a . . ." she could barely get the words out, 'superbitch!' "

Burroughs was unmoved. As Natalia tried to repair her mascara with her fingertips, he said, "You've made millions of dollars and achieved world-wide recognition on *Tinseltown;* I've met people a lot worse off than you."

"Oh, the hell with you," she said, back to being Edwina again. "I'm innocent, no matter what Lombard or that fat stooge of his tells you. And I have a message you can give them . . ."

There was a jiggling sound at the door. Burroughs tried to turn and see what it was.

"This!" Natalia said, grabbing his face in her hands and kissing him. Whether this was the in-

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tended "message," or it was precipitated by the sound at the door, Burroughs would probably never know.

As much as he enjoyed Natalia's wet, clinging caresses, he managed to pull himself away from her before it could go any further. What appeared to be a derelict had opened the door and was staggering into the apartment.

"Oh, Derek, it's you," she said. She looked at Burroughs. "My husband, Derek. Derek, this is Paul Burroughs, a private investigator."

Burroughs thought it was a good thing Mr. Winters was plastered. He felt a bit awkward sitting there, wearing so much of Mrs. Winters' make-up. He used his cocktail napkin judiciously, while her husband gave a perfunctory nod and continued on his unsteady course toward the bedroom.

"What's-uh-wrong with him?" Mr. Winters had been a rather cadaverous sight, unshaven, badly dressed. Maybe that's what came of living with Natalia-Edwina.

"Never mind him," Natalia said. But something wouldn't let her give it up. She sighed, then continued in a weak and weary voice. "My husband has a pile of unproduced screenplays and TV show treatments climbing up to the ceiling in his study. It isn't easy being the unsuccessful husband of an internationally-known figure, such as myself. Please, young man—Mr. Burroughs—you'd better go now."

Pity the poor, misguided rich, Burroughs thought as he rode down in the elevator. They have everything everyone else wants—but they're all so unlucky in love.

The three men had a busy week. John Morton and crew thought of new, even more startling, plot developments for *Tinseltown* ("Jennie gets a role in a horror movie and finds out that the daughter she'd thought died at childbirth is playing the killer infant"); Barry Lombard was on the phone assuring everyone that while he was tightening security, he was confident of *Tinseltown's* continued "smash-eroo" success; and Paul Burroughs interviewed virtually every member of the cast and crew in hopes of picking up either information or hidden implications of guilt. Beside Natalia Winters, there were four major suspects:

Judson Jessup, who played Senator Bullfinch on the program, gave him dubious pointers on trapping the felon while denying he was angry over a recent contract dispute. He seemed too addled to be capable of soap opera espionage, or much of anything else. *Belinda Edwards,* the smitten assistant script girl, invited him over for a homecooked meal and "personalized ravaging—anytime." She had the most frequent access to the writers' offices, and the lowest salary of the lot. *Sally Byrd Friar,* the program's venerable matriarch, mistook him for her

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nephew—her eyesight and memory were failing. She was good friends with the producers of at least two competing programs. *Donald Dean Young,* who played Harcourt James, the guilt-tormented transvestite, suggested they discuss things while cruising along Hollywood Boulevard for hookers. He was quite vocal in his hatred of his role—and the fact that he was being dropped at season's end—but denied stealing any secrets. All and sundry wondered why Burroughs was a P.I. instead of an actor. "So young and handsome," the women crooned.

There were people connected to the show who had drug problems, or other expensive habits, who might need extra money, but none would have had much opportunity to learn the forbidden information. Burroughs did his homework on Natalia Winters, too. She'd become notorious for not learning her lines and for holding up production throughout her career; lately, she'd started drinking—which only made matters worse. No photographic memory there, that was for sure.

The more people he talked to, the more he was convinced that his employer was right: Natalia Winters was somehow involved. She or her husband. If Derek Winters—actually, Derek Stoneheld—was bitter over his wife's success, might he not be somehow engineering the sabotage all by his lonesome? But *how?*

Burroughs met with John and Barry, in Lombard's office, to talk things over at the end of the week. Matters had gotten worse. There, in the most recent issue of the *Scrutinizer,* was a report on a new night-time soap—a midseason replacement—on a competing channel, that looked like the worst threat to *Tinseltown* ever. The *Scrutinizer* had also found out what the new show's projected storylines were, but Morton and Lombard couldn't benefit from the information as the show was now sure to change its plots even as *Tinseltown* was doing.

Cousin John had further information. "The storyline for *L.A. Sinners* seemed somewhat familiar to me when I read it. And then I realized—they're using the basic plotlines I worked up six months ago and then discarded." He explained for Burroughs' benefit: "Everything this first half of the season was supposed to have revolved around the return of a character, Edwina's twin brother. But the actor we wanted wouldn't agree to our terms. The whole bit was scrapped and we worked up something new. The cast was on vacation; they didn't know about it until we'd started the first week of filming."

"Natalia wasn't 'on vacation,' " Lombard snickered. "She was in here every day, demanding to be released from her contract."

"So, someone stole the original plot projections for the first half of the season, too," Burroughs

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remarked. "They thought they had the real item. By the time they found out you were switching, it was too late to do them any good—the show had already started. Publishing the new plotline would have been a mediocre scoop at best. By the way, I spoke to my contact at the *Scrutinizer*—there's no way they'll tell us who their source was. However, my contact thought the information might have arrived anonymously in the mail. If that's the case, whoever's doing it isn't after money."

"Twice now, dammit," Lombard snapped. "Well, I don't want it to happen a third time. Burroughs, what are you going to do about it?"

Outwardly, the detective was as calm as ever. "Does everyone know that you're going to work up a new storyline?"

The executive producer nodded. "A few, why?"

"Everyone else assumes you're still going ahead as planned, in spite of the *Scrutinizer's* article?"

"I guess so. Lots of shows do just that. They figure not everyone will have read or heard about the pieces. Or it's simply too late to make extensive changes."

"I want you to tell selected people that you're working on a new plotline," Burroughs said determinedly. "You're going to 'leak' a few spicy bits—false items, of course—a different one to each suspect. These 'previews' have got to be really sensational, something our informant will rush to the papers with in another attempt to botch up the program."

Morton and Lombard agreed it was a good idea. John immediately went off to huddle with his writers, to think of suitably shocking developments.

In one week, they'd find out who their "saboteur" was.

"All right. Just suppose I was guilty," Natalia Winters was hollering. "What would you do? Fire me?"

Lombard let out a mirthless laugh. "No such luck, sweetie. You're stuck on *Tinseltown* for the rest of the year, whether you like it or not. But I can and will press charges against you. Need I remind you of the secrecy clause in your contract? You'll be sued for so much of your income, you'll be going back to your precious broadway in rags and handmedowns by the time I'm through with you."

The prospect did not sit well with Natalia. "You have no proof of anything, Barry." She stood in front of the desk glaring down at Lombard, with John Morton at her side like a policeman waiting to arrest her. Burroughs stepped over from the corner of Lombard's office and intervened.

"Each of the main suspects was given false information, Natalia. You were told, confidentially, I might add, that later this season you would be getting married to a 16-year-old boy, to be played by—"

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"You, babyface?" she said with a contemptuous leer.

"—Michael Jackson, as you already know. We knew no one could resist leaking that to the *Scrutinizer.* No one else—I mean absolutely no one else—was given that information. And," he held up the latest issue of the tabloid, "here it is in big letters on page 17. Pictures of you and Michael, too. Taken separately, of course."

Natalia would not budge an inch. "What if I did leak that particular story? That doesn't mean I'm guilty of the more serious charge of giving away the legitimate storylines? You can't sue me over that. It was a fake story, and I can always say it was obvious to me that you were pulling my leg."

"Why did you do it?" Burroughs asked.

"I didn't do anything. I must have accidentally mentioned the Jackson story at the cocktail party on Wednesday. I get so tipsy after just a sip or two, you know."

Burroughs rolled his eyes. "Sure."

"May I go, gentlemen? I'm quite tired, and bored with all of this. You have nothing on me and you know it. I am *not* the one you're after." She whirled about and marched out of the office with a triumphant sneer on her face. "Sorry your little plan didn't work."

"Damn," Lombard said when the door closed. "We know it's her. It's gotta be."

"But how can we prove it?" Morton asked miserably.

Burroughs said nothing.

Morton was escorting Burroughs to the exit from the building, a few minutes later. "I don't know how much longer he'll want to keep paying you," he told his cousin sympathetically.

"I understand. Let's face it, I haven't been doing much good. . ."

They waited for the security man to frisk a departing actor. The guard motioned for him to hold up and unfold the rolled up paper he was carrying. It was the script—typescript on one side, blank on the other—held together by a staple in the upper left-hand corner; clearly Lombard didn't believe in such frills as protective binding. The guard flipped through the script carefully.

Burroughs had already rejected the idea of anyone merely writing notes on their script copy; Lombard had said the report in the paper had been much too detailed, and no one would have had time to copy it all. Besides, the guards would have noticed if there were any scribbles on the blank side of the script, or too many notations on the front.

And then it hit him. Burroughs quickly formulated another plan.

A fake, five-page plot summary was left laying in Morton's office right out in the open, while an equally false emergency was enacted. Natalia was in Lombard's office, called in

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to discuss "script updates." Suddenly there was a gunshot; a scream. Lombard jumped up and ran out of his office. He headed down the hall, in the direction from which the "noises" had originated. Morton, his writing staff, and the other executives, followed.

They stayed away for a full ten minutes, giving Natalia plenty of time to do what she had to do.

The guard stopped her, as usual, when she was leaving the building after her meeting with Lombard had ended. She'd been told a backfiring car had careened onto the sidewalk.

Natalia emptied her purse, held up her script.

"Just my script," she said, giving the man a pleasant smile. The female guard patted Natalia's body, looking for suspicious papery bulges.

The male guard smiled back and handed her the script, which he had given a quick going-over. Natalia went on her way.

"Hold it!"

Burroughs stepped out from around the corner, Lombard and Morton behind him. He grabbed Natalia's script and pointed to two tiny pinpricks above the staple in the upper lefthand corner. "Note that originally there was another staple above this second one," he said, and started to carefully study each page of the script in succession. "Ah ha!" He had found what he was after. It was hard to see, impossible if one weren't looking closely, but it was there.

Natalia broke down and confessed.

"It wasn't the program I was trying to hurt, to get away from. It was my husband. He's such a miserable failure, he gets drunk and beats me, drives me to drink, too. By calling in a few favors, I got him a job as writer on that new soap, *L.A. Sinners,* though he's still only sober half the time. I figured the show—and Derek—would have a better chance of surviving if *Tinseltown* lost some of its appeal, if audiences watched his show instead of mine.

"I not only stole the last plot projections—as well as the ones you didn't use for the fall—but I gave them to him to adapt for the new series." She looked at Morton. "There were some splendid ideas in there, Johnny. . .Cecily marrying her mother's amnesiac boyfriend while he's disguised as a rock star. . .wonderful!" She got a handkerchief out of her handbag and wiped her eyes. "Forgive me, Barry. I would have simply divorced Derek, but I wanted to wait until he was on his own two feet first. I don't believe in kicking anyone when they're down."

Married to several million dollars, Burroughs mused. *Can't get much lower than that, all right.*

Natalia had removed the staple from her script, after snatching the plot outline, then put five of its pages

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on top of the stack of xerox paper that the material was supposed to be duplicated on. That way, when she copied the pages of the plot outline, they would be duplicated not onto the regular blank copy paper but right on top of the script itself. She reduced the size of the image as much as possible and moved the dial to its lightest setting, knowing that it would come out so faint—and be partially hidden by the actual words of the script besides—that one would have to have a very sharp eye to see it, even if one already knew it was there. (The people at the *Scrutinizer* had simply spent painstaking hours with a magnifying glass to get the information, which, Natalia said, arrived at the office with the unsigned note containing instructions.) Afterwards, she'd stapled the pages back together and replaced the "borrowed" outline. Later, she'd recopied the five offending pages at an outside copy center so the illicit overlying material would hardly show up at all.

"But she actually forgot all about that on Thursday, when I went to see her," Burroughs explained. "That's why she wouldn't let me see her script. She got each week's script a few days in advance, for memorizing, giving her plenty of time to do her copy machine trick and mail it to the *Scrutinizer* office in time to make their latest deadline. Her husband had her so upset that particular week, she did too much drinking and temporarily panicked when I tried to look at her script. That should have made me suspicious right away.

"Without a photographic memory, there had to be some way she was getting all that detailed info out of the building, especially when there was no time to write it all down and no place to hide it, even if she could—and no time to read it over the phone to anyone, either. The script and the copy machine added up to the only possible answer."

Lombard agreed not to press charges if Natalia would stay with the show for at least another season. They would be careful to make sure her hands were kept off any future plot projectives.

Over a drink, Burroughs asked his cousin, "Aren't you worried about how her husband's show, *L.A. Sinners,* will do?"

"Ah, maybe we were getting too complacent in our success," Morton said. "Maybe this whole situation will keep us on our toes. Besides," he lowered his voice, "we have a great gimmick for the second half of the year. Listen to this!"

Burroughs was all ears.

"This wicked old woman who wants a body transplant, and needs lots of bodies to choose from, kidnaps the *Rockettes.* We're thinking of getting Elizabeth Taylor or Bette Davis. Maybe Greta Garbo. . ."

Burroughs groaned and ordered another drink. ■

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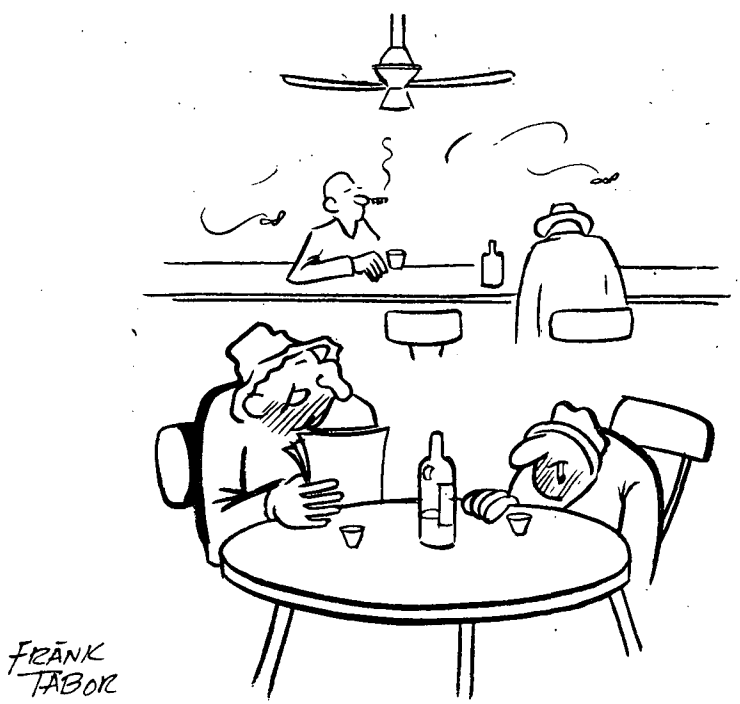
Did you know...

The neutral nations of Europe during World War II were rarely that. Even one of Europe's smallest and most precarious states was directly involved in the O.S.S.'s VESSEL project, which gave the U.S. accurate reports on Tokyo's industry, railroads, marshalling yards, and other information necessary for strategic bombing.

In 1942, Giovanni Battista Montini contacted the O.S.S. in Washington and offered the information. VESSEL's reports were wired from Tokyo to Dublin, then via London and Washington to the U.S. Navy in the Pacific, where they became part of the operational file for the bombings of Tokyo and thus made a major contribution to the destruction of the city and its populace.

Years later, Msgr. Giovanni Battista Montini was proclaimed Pope Paul VI by the College of Cardinals in Rome. The Vatican had run VESSEL from its Tokyo and Dublin embassies in one of the most flagrant abuses of religious and diplomatic immunity ever recorded.



"Is better than new tank plans. Is plans for next big toy fad."

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Photo: CBS Studios

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INTERVIEW: BRUCE BOXLEITNER

by Stanley Wiater

Fans of *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* (CBS TV) will have no trouble recognizing the handsome features of Bruce Boxleitner. In this successful series, in which he co-stars with Kate Jackson, Boxleitner plays dashing Lee Stetson (code-named "Scarecrow"), a secret agent who is improbably teamed with divorcee Amanda King to defend our country from foreign spies and preserve the free world as we know it.

Boxleitner makes no bones about *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* being an "absolute, total fantasy," and fervently hopes that the readers of ESPIONAGE take that into consideration when viewing the show.

At age 35, Boxleitner is already the veteran of two other television series, *How the West was Won* and *Bring 'Em Back Alive.* We spoke to him recently from his home in the San Fernando Valley, where he lives with his wife, actress Kathryn Holcomb, and his two young children. A big fan of Westerns and the Old West, Boxleitner's Spanish hacienda-style house is filled with Western and Indian artifacts and artwork, including paintings by Charles Russell and Frederick Remington. The property surrounding the house has stables for his three horses, and Boxleitner often relaxes by going riding. That is, when he can *find* the time to relax. As his series enters its fourth season, the Scarecrow doesn't usually have much time left for anything but saving the world—and Mrs. King—every week.

ESPIONAGE: To begin with, we're curious to know if there will be any major changes in the series for this new season?

BOXLEITNER: Basically, the show is about the relationship between Lee and Amanda; we're just going to re-emphasize that and spend a little less time with the other characters. We're also going to try and be more of an action-adventure type show and have a little less of Amanda's homelife with the children and her mother. The characters have to be redefined, just to keep them interesting for another year. We've been stringing viewers

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along for three seasons in terms of Lee and Amanda ever becoming lovers—"Are they going to get together or aren't they going to get together?" It can be either good or bad for the ratings but, as they say, we either have to "do it" or get off the pot! But I don't think the writers themselves know what they want to do with that yet.

ESPIONAGE: Considering the amount of violence that's displayed in series such as *Miami Vice,* the action on your show seems always to be downplayed.

BOXLEITNER: Well, each show has its own set of rules, especially concerning its time slot. *Magnum P.I.* can be more hard-hitting and violent one week, and then comical the next week, while we pretty much have to follow the status quo all the way through the season. But our eight o'clock (time slot) is entirely different than the ten o'clock when *Miami Vice* is on. We get to sneak a few things in . . . but I would prefer our show to be more hard-hitting, like the series I've been on in the past. I mean, if I have a preference, *Miami Vice* is *my* favorite show! But the networks equate "action" with "violence," which isn't necessarily the truth. I mean, a car going screaming around a corner is an "act of violence," according to television codes and practices. I find that a bit ridiculous, but . . . !

ESPIONAGE: Though *Scarecrow and Mrs. King* is about the cold-blooded world of spy versus spy, it sometimes seems as though the heroes and villains ultimately can only talk each other to death.

BOXLEITNER: Oh, they certainly do! It's bloodless. In the eight o'clock slot, we have to *tell* you more about it than we can *show* you, so it gets a little frustrating. You have to remember our show is an absolute *fantasy*—but then, it's as much a fantasy as the latest James Bond film. I really think the Bond films have gone way beyond any kind of reality. So I do get a little miffed with our own show. I keep telling the writers I want a minimum of dialogue—*I do not want to talk!* Now, most actors would go chasing after them, saying "I need more lines, I need more lines!" But heroes do *not* talk. That's the way it has always been, whether they've been spies or cowboys or soldiers; what have you. The less said the better—it should be done with something other than the spoken word. But we're not trying to do a "realistic" series; remember, in the very first season, it started out as a female fantasy coming true for Amanda.

ESPIONAGE: You're currently in your fourth season (Fall 1986)—has that made the series

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more or less interesting for you?

BOXLEITNER: Well, it's hard to maintain any series after the first season. I believe that in about five seasons, you've said just about everything you can say in a television series. But that first season was a lot different than the way it is now; back then, it was *totally* phoney-balony, and now it's a little more "realistic." I realize the intelligence community is very computerized now, but I scream every week when I see my script: "Enough of this computer technology! I can't stand it!" It's just very difficult to say some of these lines, and you're worried about talking too much! But there's no denying that in television the writers have a "formula" which they have to write— often times, in the second half hour, we tell you what happened in the first half hour—do you know what I'm saying? Because the producers feel that viewers just may be tuning in, for example. It's a very difficult game to write an hour script for a series and manage to keep it fresh.

ESPIONAGE: As we recall, the premise for the series was that of a woman's daydreams of adventure literally becoming reality, similar to the premise of the film *Romancing the Stone.*

BOXLEITNER: Yeah, that's it. That's it exactly. Also, the show is geared toward the female audience, which really isn't concerned with the intelligence and imagination of spy operations—they couldn't give a hoot about it—they just want to see if Lee and Amanda are going to kiss or not. I think when we get more of the intrigue and adventure side of it going, we'll attract more of a male audience. But given the parameters I have to work in, I try to make Lee Stetson as "real" as I can.

ESPIONAGE: How so?

BOXLEITNER: Oh, he's short-tempered. He's not always nice to Amanda. But he does love her, even though he refuses to admit it to himself. I think that Lee and Amanda are two people who are in love with each other, but neither of them will really come out and admit it. But the writers are going to have to do something—you can only string along the audience for so long, and then they'll say, "Okay, they're never going to do anything together, so the hell with it." But, basically, our show is for women—Monday nights, men watch football and women watch *Scarecrow and Mrs. King.*

ESPIONAGE: Lee Stetson usually goes through his escapades with nary a hair out of place. Yet more and more series are allowing the hero to be a bit more rugged and unkempt, ala the stars of *Miami Vice* and *Moonlighting.*

BOXLEITNER: Believe me, that's the type of thing I would

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like to get to do more. But it's really crazy. I did a series called *How the West was Won*, and I had shoulder-length hair and a grubby beard half the time, and then they made me get all cleaned up for this series, and now these guys are allowed to walk around doing it!

ESPIONAGE: We understand you've done some of your own stuntwork in the series. What sort of stunts are you permitted to do?

BOXLEITNER: Nowadays, I only do things that I know won't break my neck! I used to be more of a daredevil. I've had a number of injuries: I've got a bad ankle, I cracked my skull in the first episode of this season, I've had neck problems, some spine problems. . .These are the results of fights, of climbing up things and falling off of things—I mostly do my own fight scenes but I have a number of doubles when they're needed. But I've backed off some. Doing your own stunt work, that's something that comes with youth: "I can do my own thing. I'm tough." And then you find out, after you hurt yourself a few times and have to keep going and need doctors and painkillers. . .that's why we have professional stuntmen. Ask James Garner—he's having such bad back problems and leg problems that he's almost a crippled man. . .because he used to do a lot of his own stuntwork. But I suppose everybody has to try.

ESPIONAGE: It's well known that the work on any television series is very demanding. What's your production schedule like for a typical season?

BOXLEITNER: We try to turn out an episode every eight to eight and a half days. That's really like doing a movie every eight days. And given the weather problems at any given time of the year, it can get kind of hectic. But we do 22 episodes a year, non-stop without a break, except for Christmas and Thanksgiving.

ESPIONAGE: How many hours a day?

BOXLEITNER: It's basically a 14 hour day, though we do an occasional 16 hour day. Whew! I don't go to any wild Hollywood parties—who has the time?

ESPIONAGE: Although you're in your fourth season with the series, we know you take time during your summer hiatus to work on other projects, usually movies made for television. Why is that?

BOXLEITNER: You've got to constantly stretch yourself a little bit; but I won't stray too far, because there's a certain public perception of me that I want. I mean, I steer away from light comical material. I *don't* want to become a light comedic actor; I feel that's the end. Humor is fine, but I like it within a serious show. With light com-

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edy, nobody takes you seriously after a while . . . *at all.* I started out as a dramatic actor and I intend to stay one.

ESPIONAGE: You mentioned Tom Selleck earlier, who has tried to branch out into doing motion pictures. Is this on the horizon for you as well?

BOXLEITNER: Oh, I'd love to, but I have no intention of saying "I am now leaving television to move on to feature films." Television has been *very* good to me. I've done two feature films that didn't do a heck of a lot, so that medium—although I love it—doesn't impress me all that much. I like the pace of television somewhat better than features. I mean, you're always working! I guess it's my Mid-western background: I have to go someplace where I can punch in a time-clock. And I need to know that paycheck is coming in week in and week out; that I'm not just working six weeks out of the year and wondering, "Okay, now what do I do with myself?"

ESPIONAGE: We're wondering if you've had any interesting experiences due to your being a star of a series that deals with spies and the espionage field.

BOXLEITNER: I was once in Tokyo Airport waiting for a flight, and two guys walked up to me—real short-cropped hair, with sunglasses on. And I said to myself, "These guys look like spooks, for God's sake." One of them hands me this card that says, *Military Intelligence-Seoul, Korea,* and then the guy says, "Love your show!" I thought these two guys were coming up to waste me, right? Just take me out right there! But it was funny, because I had the feeling that "Oh my God, these really *are* intelligence men." So I started apologizing my ass off: "It's just a fantasy, that's all it is. . ." and they said, "No, no, keep it that way. We love it. We get a good laugh out of it." So when we were talking about realism before, you can see nobody really wants it to be "real."

ESPIONAGE: A criticism of the show is that Lee and Amanda sometimes seem relegated to cases which, actually, any metropolitan police force could handle; cases which are not even remotely "espionage work."

BOXLEITNER: Oh, absolutely. But that was one thing the network wanted us to do, to once in a while get away from the foreign accents and foreign locations, so they made us more of a police kind of show. I got down on the producers in one particular episode, where I told them that "This isn't CIA-type work; you've got us doing work that the police would be involved in, not an intelligence agency." So I think we've gotten more involved again with ter-

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rorism, and situations that would deal with international security. We've just done an episode that takes place in Afghanistan. But how far can we go? The networks are uptight about using Arabs as the bad guys, but that's who in the hell they are, as far as I'm concerned. I mean, we don't shoot people in airplanes and throw their bodies out on the tarmac, or capture them and hold them hostage. It's getting *me* angry, because we have all these pressure groups saying "You can't represent certain peoples like that." So we have the Russians nearly all the time as the bad guys. Even television shows should reflect the way things are going on in the world now; I personally am not so worried about the Soviets as I am certain Arabic nations.

ESPIONAGE: Realizing that Kate Jackson's production company owns half of *Scarecrow And Mrs. King*, isn't it logical to assume that the two of you have more artistic control over the series than most stars normally would?

BOXLEITNER: We do—but we don't. We answer to a greater power. It's called the network, and stars really don't have anything to say about what a series should be. We can scream and make little suggestions concerning Lee and Amanda's immediate relationship but even then we get squelched. Last season, we started to push the romantic angle and they would just cut it right out. They're pretty much in control of everything. So they're like the big Agency over our agency. It's strange.

ESPIONAGE: Even so, since Jackson owns half the series, she's still the boss, more or less, on the set, isn't she?

BOXLEITNER: Well, Katie runs the show pretty much. I could have a lot more to say about it but I go home instead at the end of the day. It's funny, because we're really the opposite in real life of the characters we play. Kate's single, and leads the single life, and I'm the family-oriented man with the wife and kids. I'm much more "Amanda," and she's much more "Lee."

ESPIONAGE: We understand that Jackson directed an episode last season and is planning to do more.

BOXLEITNER: Yes, and I think it was one of our best. And it's not just an ego-trip—a lot of actors are very fine directors. I think the experience for Katie worked, partly because she was working with a very tight, almost family-like, group. Oftentimes, a director comes in and he's like an outsider to a group of people who are with each other day after day after day. Plus, Katie knows what she's doing—this is her third hit series (after *The Rookies* and

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Charlie's Angels). She knows what's going on, in front of and behind the camera. She's not "difficult" in the sense that you can't work with her, but she is very demanding on herself and on everyone around her. And if you can't handle that, then naturally she's going to come off stronger. She's *very* strong.

ESPIONAGE: But there are no strong conflicts between you?

BOXLEITNER: We've had our days; we've had words. But while we're doing this series, we're *married.* I have two "wives." And two lives. During most of the season, I'm with Kate more than I am my own wife. And working day in and day out with anybody, it's not . . . all chuckles. We've had our disagreements—hell, we've had a few good knock-down rows; I'm not ashamed to admit it. It happens. We've battled, and we've made up. You can't live with that pressure every day, of trying to turn out a sixty minute movie every week, without occasionally blowing up. It's basically artistic temperament—I mean, we both have fairly good-sized egos. Kate has her idiosyncrasies, and I do, too.

ESPIONAGE: Is there any chance you'll be directing an episode this season?

BOXLEITNER: It's a big maybe right now. If I did, it would have to be the kind of episode that was much more action-oriented, if we can do that.

ESPIONAGE: Any occurrences on the set that seemed hilarious at the time, but never made it on the air?

BOXLEITNER: Oh, there've been so many! But none that you could print, really. We get pretty goofy when the long hours take their toll, and a lot of us have a dirty sense of humor. But Kate's an earthy gal; she can take and give it with the best of 'em. I mean, when you're working with 50 to 60 men everyday, all day long, you've got to learn to laugh and scratch as they do. Kate's a lot of fun in that respect.

ESPIONAGE: Do you see any major changes with the other characters in the show, such as Amanda's mother, your boss Billy Melrose, or Francine?

BOXLEITNER: I don't think so. As I said earlier, if the show changes at all, it'll be more of an emphasis on Scarecrow and Amanda. But that's something I really can't answer, and I doubt that Kate can either.

ESPIONAGE: Finally, considering your schedule, we're curious as to what you do on a typical weekend at home, such as this one.

BOXLEITNER: I do nothing! I hang around the house. I may go out riding later . . . but that's about it!

ESPIONAGE: Thank you, Mr. Boxleitner. ■

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LAST TIME OUT

by
Rolle R. Rand

She didn't look like a spy—Hanson sipped meditatively at his *champurrado*—but what does a spy look like?

Hanson's gaze brushed past her again—blonde hair in a ponytail, a sprinkling of pale freckles across a retrousse nose, wide eyes cobalt blue—then continued on out of the canopied sidewalk cafe toward the traffic snarling along Mexico City's Insurgentes Sur. The gas fumes attacked his nostrils, made his thick hot chocolate drink taste like petrol-flavored mud. He set down the heavy white earthenware cup.

It was hard to believe she was a KGB agent, one of the most efficient in *Directorate S,* the branch responsible for placing specially trained and linguistically skilled operatives in foreign countries. Put her in a cheerleader's costume, she would have looked at home on any American campus from U.S.C. to O.U. to C.C.N.Y. Hanson grinned inwardly: We live in a world of initials: The C.I.A. forever, farewell to the F.B.I., hello Mexico City, D.F.

Hanson's thoughts shifted gears again: Could Bannister have been wrong this time? Perish the thought, Tom m'boy. You know—as every agent, case officer and chief of station knows—Sam Bannister is never wrong. You don't move up in the Company from agent to CO to COS and now, Director of the FI staff, by making mistakes. There is no room for error in Foreign Intelligence. That's what it says in the Manual, in italics.

Still . . . suppose this woman—girl?—who looked about twenty-eight years old going on nineteen, wasn't Tania Karakov? Hanson's glance traveled across the dozen marble-topped tables to where she was sitting. Maybe she was just another tourist and not the body he was supposed to deliver alive to a Company "safe house" on the Texas side of the Rio Grande, a mere 700-odd miles away. For more than a week the bait had been placed, the trap had been set, but . . . no Tania.

He frowned slightly. Damn Sam Bannister anyway. Ten days ago,

Illustration by Rob Richards

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Bannister had summoned him to a one-on-one meeting in the C.I.A. headquarters building, eight miles from Washington, D.C.

"I have an assignment for you, Tom," Bannister began without preliminaries.

"Uh-uh. No way," Hanson said firmly. "You've done it to me twice, sending me back into the field. I've put in my time; I've got the scars to prove it. You promised it would be my last time out two missions back."

"I lie a lot." Bannister's thin smile was as warm as a pawnbroker's. When Hanson didn't respond, he added, "That's a *funny,* Tom, in case you don't know."

"I'll tell you what I do know, Sam: you're doing it to me again. I've spent my entire career in FI and CI out of the country; Mexico,

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Cairo, Berlin, Paris. Along the way, I've been beaten up, shot once, stabbed twice. Finally I was brought home, a wreck, no more covert action, to finish out as a CT instructor at The Farm. I just want to wet-nurse these green career trainees long enough to make it to my pension. Don't dump another one on me, Sam."

"So?" Bannister leaned back in his chair, regarding Hanson as if grading beef.

"So this." Hanson hurriedly opened his shirt, pulling it wide to expose his chest. Two dimpled holes indicated where his nipples had been. "Remember my last time out, Sam? When I caught up with those two KGB penetration agents in Mexico City? They had just about wired our entire embassy there for sound. I was tailing them, closing in, figuring my backup was behind me. They were behind me, all right; two miles behind me, drinking tequila sours in a cafe in the *Zona Rosa.*"

"Contract employees are not always reliable," Bannister said mildly.

"They had fun with me, those two clowns from *Department V.*" Hanson rebuttoned his shirt. "I don't know why they didn't finish the job instead of dumping me half dead in Chapultepec Park. Maybe I was supposed to be an example, a warning."

"You didn't talk. That's what counts, Tom."

"How could I? I was too busy screaming, when I wasn't unconscious." Hanson's voice was bitter. "You promised me, Sam, in the hospital: no more missions. That's what you said, there, in Mexico City."

Bannister cleared his throat. "Speaking of Mexico City, Tania Karakov is in town. She's taken a small apartment off the Reforma, not too far from the American Embassy. Calls herself 'Penny Ralston.' "

"The Tania Karakov? Star girl spook from *Directorate S?"* Hanson was visibly impressed. "Last I heard, she was in Paris, still blackmailing that deputy foreign minister she photographed cavorting in the buff with two nude females, one of whom happened to be herself. Must be something big for Moscow Center to let her get this far from home. There's a high official in the Politburo who thinks she's the best thing that's happened to Russia since vodka and caviar."

Bannister nodded. "It is big. Very. What she's after is a code book listing the names of our covert agents and contract employees in Mexico and Central and South America. *Directorate S* believes the book is in Mexico City."

"Is it?"

Bannister answered by unlocking a desk drawer. He extracted a 4 x 6 black address book and nudged it toward Hanson.

"Not quite. Take this with you when you report to our Embassy as a new Cultural Affairs Officer.

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But don't go after Tania. Let her come to you."

"Now just a cotton-pickin' minute, Sam, who said I was going?"

Bannister's bright inquiring eyes—they reminded Hanson of a Doberman Pinscher's—didn't change expression. He said, "You remember Brooks and Ryan?"

"Sure. We went through CT training together. Ryan was my COS in Cairo."

"They're in Lubyanka Prison, both of them. A mission went sour. If you care to write them, the address is 2 Dzerzhinsky Square, Moscow. I don't know the Zip."

Hanson twisted uncomfortably in his chair. "You don't have to be sarcastic. Why didn't you say you want to grab Tania so you can swap her for Brooks and Ryan?"

"I was too busy feeling sorry for you, chum."

Hanson chose to ignore this. "Isn't it risky using the code book as bait? Or is it a prop filled with phony listings?"

"After seventeen years, you're learning." Bannister's bleak smile held a hint of humor. "A few of the names are bona fide; but they're expendable, suspected double agents.

"You're probably wondering how Tania will know you have the book?"

"The thought crossed my mind," Hanson admitted dryly.

"There's a Soviet-type mole burrowed deep in our embassy." Bannister permitted himself a cross between a chuckle and a grunt. "We've known his identity for months. We feed him disinformation constantly. He'll set the trap without realizing it."

He removed a snapshot from a file folder, extended it to Hanson. "Not a very good picture of Tania Karakov, but it's all we have. Enough to identify her."

Hanson studied the photo, a muddy likeness of a fair-haired girl wearing a dirndl dress, and looked back at Bannister. "So I get Tania. Then what?"

"Take her to a safe-house, the one between McAllen and Hidalgo. Use the Reynosa crossing. The customs and immigration people there will be clued in enough to avoid any static."

"Wouldn't it be easier to lure her to the States, then grab her? Seven hundred-plus miles is a long way to haul a body."

Bannister pointed a stern finger at Hanson. "I want Tania alive, Tom. Remember that. No more talk about a 'body.' I want her to disappear in Mexico, not in the United States, so the Mexican government will have to do the explaining, not us. If we're to swap successfully for Ryan and Brooks, we have to control this situation all the way: picking Tania's brain before we turn her over, the timing for the exchange offer, the leak to the media, all that other good stuff. That's why it's set up so she'll have to come to you, not the other way around. Okay? Any questions?"

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"No. I guess not." Hanson stood up. "There's a four p.m. flight out of Washington International that should get me into Mexico City in time for dinner." He paused, then said strongly, "But this is it, Sam. This is my last time out. I want your word, such as it is. Deal?"

Bannister turned in his chair to look out the window; it was snowing hard. He swung about to face Hanson. "Deal. You have my word."

Hanson tried to find some sincerity among Bannister's words. He had heard this song before. Twice. The third time's the charm, they say. Whoever *they* are, they don't know Bannister. He moved toward the door.

Ten days now, Hanson reflected. The only positive thing about being here is the weather: cool, but beautiful. He had checked in at the embassy, found a furnished apartment in *Colonia Napoles,* and had set up a routine to make it easier for Tania Karakov to surface and establish contact. The black code book was wrapped in plastic and taped inside the lid covering the tank of his apartment commode.

Each day since arriving he had risen at eight, breakfasted at a small restaurant across the street from his apartment, and had taken a cab for the short ride to the American Embassy. Here he went through the pretense of working—attending staff briefings, meeting with junketing congressmen from the States—until it was time for a two-hour lunch at a sidewalk cafe. Then, a visit to the National Museum for an hour and a return to the Embassy for more play-acting until closing. Evenings consisted of dinner at a neighborhood eatery, an occasional early movie, and withdrawing to his apartment to wait for Tania Karakov, who didn't come—until today.

It had to be her; she was the only snub-nosed, blue-eyed, ponytailed blonde he had seen since stepping off the plane at the airport. He was almost certain she had the right amount of freckles spattering her features, although at this distance he couldn't be altogether sure. There were platoons of blondes, mostly dye jobs, at least three to the block, all over Mexico City, but until now none with the right combination of parts.

Signaling to the *mozo,* he requested his increasingly tepid drink be removed and replaced by a margarita. As the waiter hastened to comply, Hanson felt the girl's glance rest briefly upon him. He met her gaze directly and answered her slight smile with one of his own, until she averted her eyes toward the street. Well, Tania, or whatever her name, at least she was aware of him now.

He was enjoying his margarita when the commotion began: his waiter, the cafe's owner and a heavyset lady he recognized as the owner's wife had surrounded the girl and were making querulous

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demands in a mixture of Spanish and English. It appeared to be something about her bill.

Hanson wanted to intervene, but memory of Bannister's admonition—". . .don't go after Tania; let her come to you. . ."—kept him in his seat. He saw the girl lean sideways, craning to see around the three bodies blocking her view.

"You an American?" she called toward Hanson. "Can you give me a hand, please?"

"Be right there." Hanson got up, went over to join her. Her accent said California with Midwestern overtones, but half of California was from the Midwest; so what?

She smiled up at him gratefully. "Hi. I'm Penny Ralston."

Contact! Penny Ralston! The name Bannister had mentioned. Field-experienced though he was, Hanson felt his red blood corpuscles limbering up. He gave her a reassuring nod. "Tom Hanson here. What goes?"

"I came out without any money. I know it sounds dumb, but I just plain forgot," Penny said. She indicated the three Mexicans hovering expectantly about her. "These people are understandably upset. They have no reason to believe I'd return and pay my bill. If you'll lend me the money to settle up with them, you can come with me to my apartment and I'll repay you."

"No problem." Hanson reached for his wallet, masking his thoughts: Tania Karakov, you're good, even better than I expected. We could take lessons from you, Tania—Penny. "How much we talking about?"

She wrinkled her forehead. "Not much. In pesos it sounds like a lot, but ten dollars would do it."

Hanson gave the waiter a ten-dollar bill, then added another five. "For improved international relations," he explained as they left the cafe together with the good wishes of *"Que le vaya bien"* chorusing after them. . .

In the cab on the way to her apartment, Hanson saw that, up close, Penny—Tania—wasn't quite as young as he had thought. Probably she was in her thirties, maybe on the good side of thirty-five, but still lovely enough to be an entrant in a Miss Universe contest. This wasn't hard to take at all; if he had to work, it might as well be against attractive people in pleasant surroundings.

The problem now was: Should he wait for Tania to make her move or should he proceed immediately to get her across the border to *Casa Segura?* Good question. Another good question: How was he going to manage this? He couldn't just casually invite her to visit The Company's safe-house as if it were for a weekend in Acapulco.

She interrupted his thoughts. "What are you doing in Mexico?"

"I'm a Cultural Affairs Officer at the American Embassy."

"Mm, I'm impressed. That must mean you're very cultured. Are

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you?"

"It ain't necessarily so," he said lightly. "I have enough couth to get by. Having an uncle who's a United States Senator doesn't hurt, either."

He threw in this last as a carrot that might help entice her into accompanying him to the States. He could almost hear the wheels turning in her head. He asked, "What brings you to the Land of Montezuma?"

"It's a long, sad tale of woe." The taxi pulled up before a stone-fronted three-story apartment building. "I'll tell you upstairs over a drink, or coffee. Okay?"

"Sounds like a winner." Hanson followed her out of the cab, thrust some pesos at the driver. "I'll take both: coffee, and the drink for a chaser."

"Now that's what I call true couth," Penny said. Laughing, she took his arm and led him into the building and up the stairs to her first-floor apartment.

As she groped in her handbag for her keys, Hanson glimpsed a thick packet of travelers checks and enough folded currency to buy the cafe they had just left, let alone settle her small tab. She looked at him quickly, but his smile was disarming. Taking the keys from her hand, he inserted one into the lock and opened the door.

Inside the apartment, she motioned toward a huge overstuffed sofa, turned on the radio, pushed at him the English language newspaper, *The News,* then hurried into the kitchen from whence the sounds and smells of coffee-making soon began to emerge. He wondered if the place might be bugged, if anyone was behind the closed door leading to what was probably the bedroom. The weight of the .380-caliber automatic holstered against the small of his back became increasingly reassuring.

She returned carrying a large tray with two steaming cups of coffee, a pair of cordial glasses and a quart-sized bottle of Kahlua. Without asking, she filled both glasses, handed one to him, held up her own.

"Salud!"

"Salud!" Hanson answered her toast. He waited for her to drink before sipping the coffee-flavored liqueur. He hoped his growing wariness wasn't obvious. To cover, he settled back comfortably on the sofa. "You said your being here was a long story. I've nothing but time. So?"

She shrugged. "Broken engagement. No big deal. I wasn't ready for marriage, at least not to this guy; he kind of twisted my arm so it all seemed like a good idea. Only it wasn't. Not for me; not with him. Then I had to face our accusing mutual friends in Pomona—that's in California—so I decided to leave town for a while. Mexico is close, it's inexpensive, it's different. Here I am."

She was letter-perfect, Hanson thought admiringly; not a false

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note anywhere. He'd bet a month's pay that if he called Pomona Information for her telephone number they would have a listing for a Penny Ralston. He watched appreciatively as she left the sofa, went to her purse, and took out a twenty-dollar bill. She presented it to him.

"I don't have anything smaller." Her lips were twitching in and out of an insistent smile. "You saw the money in my bag, didn't you?" When he nodded affirmatively, she said, "Why didn't you say something?"

He raised an eyebrow. "It seemed to me 'saying something' should come from you. Why the big put-on? You had enough money with you to open your own bank." He saw she was blushing, actually blushing.

"Okay. It was a device. I wanted to meet you. And I have met you. The device worked. I plead guilty, Your Honor. Pass sentence."

"Why me?" Hanson was enjoying himself, watching a skilled antagonist at work. "There are dozens of men in Mexico City who would give you the *Zocalo* and half of downtown Acapulco to. . . uh. . .dally with you."

"You know about Pomona. You know I'm alone in Mexico." She spoke simply, frankly, meeting Hanson's quizzical gaze without flinching. He was certain there wasn't a male jury anywhere that wouldn't have found her utterly convincing. "I saw you in that cafe. You looked so. . .so interesting, so worldly, so American-kind-of-safe. I felt I had to meet you. Besides, what would I do with the *Zocalo?* Who needs Acapulco?"

Hanson thought: Good, baby, good, but stop right there. Quit winners. Don't come on too strong. It takes only a mirror for me to know I'm not gorgeous, probably not even handsome. Perhaps merely good-looking, he conceded mockingly to himself, but only in a beat-up kind of way.

Leaning down slowly, she kissed him with half parted lips. Hanson felt his libido approve enthusiastically. Washington seemed a light year away. Moscow Center, eat your heart out. Then his humor faded; there were no more silent quips. There was only the pounding of his pulse as his arms went around her and he pulled her down beside him. . .

It began like that, it continued like that, with Hanson hoping it would never end, knowing it would have to. Each morning, looking at her across the breakfast table, he reminded himself she was KGB, the enemy, the opposition, the other side. The nights, however, were simpler. After dinner, dancing, exploring the city, only one question required an answer: "Your place or mine?"

The days became two weeks, lengthened into three. Hanson knew he was running out of time. He had to get her across the border before she located the code book

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and vanished, her mission completed. Daily, he checked the commode tank to make certain the book was intact. He began to press for a change of pace and scenery, a brief jaunt to the States to visit his uncle, the Senator. He took pains to point out they had already seen more of Mexico City and its environs than most Mexicans will know in a lifetime. He hoped he would not have to drug her to get her north of the river.

She made it easy for him. They were in his apartment, watching the agonies of Mexican soap opera on television. They had just finished a lunch of *Enchiladas Suiza,* washed down with *Dos Equis,* a Mexican dark beer.

"I love you, Tom," Penny said abruptly.

All his defenses went to work: *Condition Red! Battle Stations! Pilots, Man Your Planes! Tilt!* He said stagily, "Who, me? This is so sudden!"

"I mean it, Tom." Her voice was intense. "I love you very much."

"It must be the enchiladas; they'll do it to you every time." He saw her face crumple slightly, the beginning tears tremble on her lashes. He thought, What the hell? They're only words. "I'm sorry, Penny. My weird sense of humor again. I love you, too. Really."

"It's not 'Penny,' " she said fiercely. "It's Tania. Tania Karakov. I'm with the KGB. *Directorate S.* And I know you're C.I.A. I love you and I want to defect. I want to cross over, live in the United States permanently. With you."

He studied her, trying to see behind this ploy, but it was Academy Award time; her performance was too good. He got nowhere, except for a faint wistful stirring within that perhaps she might not be acting, that maybe it could be the truth.

"You don't believe me." She reached into her handbag, pulled out the black code book, placed it on the table. "Here. This should help prove I'm sincere."

Hanson examined the book: no question it was the one he had hidden in the commode tank, the one Bannister had given him in Washington. She must have lifted it within the last hour; it meant there hadn't been time or opportunity for her to have copied the contents. Of course, another KGB operative could have photographed the whole thing a week ago and replaced the book without his knowing it. If so, then why was she still here? Why this grandstand play?

"Tom?" she called his name almost timidly. "You do believe me. Please?"

"I believe you," he said decisively.

Bannister was going to love this. Sure he was. With Tania defecting, Sam would have to find another way to spring Brooks and Ryan. Unless he was still determined to stick with his original plan, turn Tania back to the KGB in the

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scheduled two-for-one exchange. But no. Even Sam Bannister wouldn't do that. He knew the KGB had special methods for dealing with defectors. By the time they finished with her. . .

Hanson shuddered. He pulled her up, kissed her, held her close. "Let's get packed. We'll leave early tomorrow morning. We've a little driving to do. Seven hundred umpteen miles to the Rio Grande. . ."

From Mexico City north, Highway 57 is a good fast road and they made excellent time. Hanson had borrowed an unmarked Buick from the Embassy garage; in order to attract less attention, he had been careful to select a car with Texas, instead of diplomatic, license plates. Tania sat beside him, her arm hooked through his as if afraid she might lose him if she were to relax her grasp.

It was well after dark when they reached the International Bridge at Reynosa. The customs and immigration people asked a few routine questions, then waved them through. As Hanson rolled up the car window, he heard the blare of a nearby radio: *"The temperature is thirty degrees and falling. Frost warnings are out for the entire Rio Grande Valley. Citrus growers should take precautions to protect their crops."* Then the bridge was behind them and they were in Hidalgo, Texas.

"Welcome to the United States," Hanson said. "The home of the free and the brave. It may not be perfect, but it's the best deal around."

Tania peered anxiously through the windshield into the unyielding darkness. "How far do we have to go now? I'm getting a little tired."

He patted her arm. "Three or four miles and we're there. I'll be ready to relax, too. It's been a long day."

"Bannister? Will I be meeting him tonight?"

Hanson shook his head. "No. He won't know we're here until I make code contact. He'll fly down in the morning in a Company jet."

Tania appeared relieved. "Good. I want a bath and some rest before I take on the fearsome Sam Bannister."

"Sam's not so bad," Hanson reassured her. Then, laughing, "It's not true he has three heads. Only two. . ."

A caliche-surfaced road came up on their right. Hanson turned into it and followed it a quarter of a mile through flanking orange groves to where the road ended abruptly before a small white stucco house, fronted with a wide covered porch. He got out of the car, applied the combinations to the double push-button front doorlocks, then reached inside to turn on the lights. He motioned to Tania to join him.

"It's like my *dacha* outside Moscow," she exclaimed delightedly, surveying the interior. "And just as cold. Don't you have heat?"

"Electric space heaters, all over

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the place." Hanson, followed by Tania, began going from room to room plugging in the heaters. "We'll have it warm in no time. This is the Rio Grande Valley, where it's not supposed to get cold, except it does, so a lot of people don't have central heat. We don't use this place all that much."

"Some hot coffee will help. I'll put the water on," Tania said, going into the kitchen. There were the sounds of cabinets opening and closing, cups and saucers rattling, water running. She turned and kissed Hanson when he came up and put his arms around her. "The kettle's filled. We'll use the instant coffee we brought with us. It's probably fresher. When the water boils, fix me a good strong cup of steaming brew and bring it to me. Please? I may even have two cups."

"Bring it where? You going someplace?"

"To soak in a hot tub. For hours. I may even spend the night there—except I won't." She took his face between her hands. "I want my first night of true freedom to be with you. I want it memorable. You made it all possible, Tom."

Hanson felt nine feet tall. He stroked her cheek lightly, kissed her again, then went to the telephone in the living room. He dialed eleven digits. From the bathroom behind him he could hear the sound of water filling the tub. A computer's monotoned words spoke into his ear: "Eight and eleven equal. . .?"

"Fourteen," Hanson said.

"Divided by two?"

"Sixteen and one-half."

"What, if anything, is special?"

"Delivery," Hanson said, both ending the identification code and indicating the status of his mission. As he replaced the receiver he could hear the kettle whistling its readiness from the kitchen.

Quickly, he put together two cups of coffee, then picked up one and carried it to the bathroom. He knocked, then opened the door in response to her "Come in, Tommy." The interior was like a sauna in July. The mirror over the lavatory was gray with steam. He held out the coffee, stretching to avoid the space heater within the small enclosure.

"You did say 'black'?"

"Yes, darling. Thank you." She patted the broad rim of the bathtub. "Set it down for me, okay? My hands are soapy."

"Isn't it a bit hot in here?" Hanson pointed toward the glowing coils of the space heater. "Don't you want that thing off?"

"I love it." Tania stretched luxuriously. "You can leave the door open, if you'd like. Should I fall asleep, dry me off and put me to bed."

Grinning, Hanson returned to the kitchen for his own coffee; it tasted strong enough to replace martinis. . .almost. He gulped deeply at the hot brew—ah, good—feeling his tiredness lessen by the minute.

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Tania called, "How about some music to bathe by? Can you get anything on that radio in the living room?"

"To hear is to obey, your highness."

He finished his coffee, set down his cup, and started out of the kitchen. As he passed into the living room, he lurched against the door jamb, hard enough to hurt. He swore briefly, rubbed his shoulder, then went to the radio and switched it on.

Checking his watch against the clock radio's digital numbers, he had difficulty making out the time. The figures were blurry. He squinted hard, but his eyes had trouble focusing. He shook his head, looked uncertainly about the room: the colors were wavering, the floor was undulating. He wanted to sit down, to fall down. He could feel the numbness oozing inside his skull, coating his brain even as he became aware of the deadening sensation moving down his legs toward his feet. Now his vision was alternately gray, then brightly colored, and his fingers had no flex.

She had done it to him! The realization seeped through what remained of his consciousness. How. . . ? When . . . ? He attempted to step, staggered, then took several faltering paces toward the open bathroom door. He sagged to his knees in the entrance.

"Wh . . . wh . . . why?" he managed to get the word out. His breathing was hoarse, rasping. He knew he was dying.

"Bannister." From within the bathtub, she looked critically at Hanson. He saw her coffee was untouched. Dimly, he grasped that she had probably laced the jar of instant coffee with a toxic substance when they had first arrived. "I'm taking him home with me, Tom. Some of our *Department V* people will be here in the morning, shortly after he arrives. We'll keep him in Moscow as security, like money in the bank. He's too effective working against us."

"Uh . . . n-n-no." Hanson tried to shake his head; it felt as if it had been secured in concrete. Again he gasped loudly, wrenching out the sound successfully this time, "No, damn it!"

"You're dying, Tom," Tania said. She sounded almost wistful. "You were so sweet. I wish it could have been different."

He was on his hands and knees now, as if playing piggyback, and could feel the warmth of the adjacent space heater beginning to scorch his flesh. He fought to draw air into his collapsing lungs; it was like trying to breathe in outer space. He lunged at the space heater, grasped it, and as he fell forward he hurled it into the tub. There was a loud splash, the sputter of sparks, the sibilant sound of instant steam.

Tania screamed shrilly, "Oh, no!" It was the last sound she ever made.

It was the last sound he ever heard.■

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A SPY IS BORN

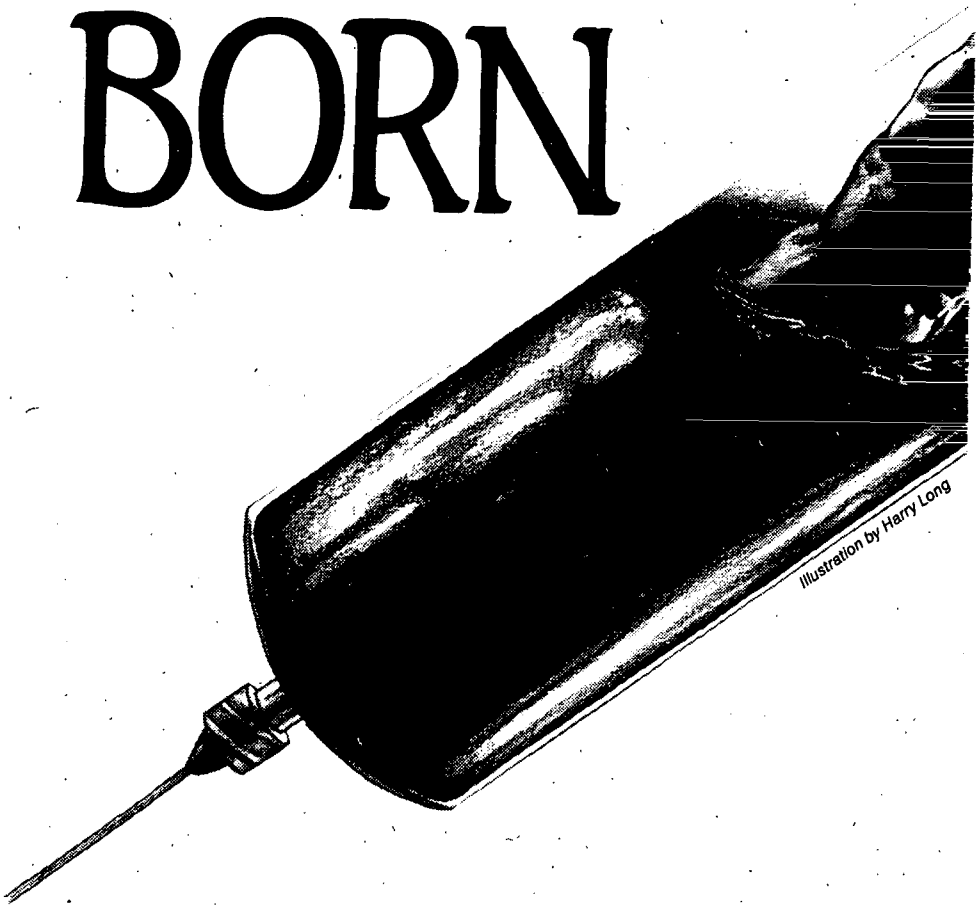

Illustration by Harry Long

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by
Gene KoKayKo

They put the first dose in his Pepsi, when he ate with his wife at McDonalds. It was subtle, relaxing him, making him more prone to suggestion. He thought it was just the effect of the food and the sunlight; it was a warm yellow day in May. He went with the feeling and mellowed the way they thought he would.

At his home, they watched and waited patiently. They knew he usually went for a walk, sometimes alone and sometimes with his wife. They didn't care which; they would get him either way. They were patient and sophisticated and they'd done this successfully before.

At five that evening, with the sun a little lower on the horizon, they watched as the man and his wife left their tiny house, walked down the path to the street and turned right toward town. The sun was in their eyes, which pleased the watchers. Every little bit helped.

His wife said, "I love this time of year, don't you? It's warm,

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but not yet hot."

"It's hot enough," he said as he rolled his shirt sleeves up.

He felt a sting, like a tiny bee—a pinprick below his left elbow—and at the same time was jogged by someone passing. Two men, oddly, in gray suits. He thought it strange, just for a moment. Their clothes were rich for this side of town, and their hair was expensively cut, perhaps with a razor, because it had a symmetry too perfect for anything else.

They walked on quickly but lost ground. The men were tall and their long strides ate the sidewalk.

"They're sure in a hurry."

"I'm not," he said. He could feel the beading of sweat on his forehead and a slight tinge of nausea in his stomach. He was queasy and suddenly tired. He faltered a step and sat on the curb.

His wife stopped. "What's wrong?"

"Dizzy," he said, shaking his head. "Bad Big Mac or something."

"I had one and I'm fine."

"You always had the stronger stomach."

She sat quietly beside him. "You're right. I don't feel so good, either." She rubbed a small red bump on her arm, then scratched at it.

"Mosquito?" he asked.

"Early for those."

On their right, around the next block, the two men paused. The taller looked at his watch with the special timer. "About now," he said. "This new stuff's quick; it absorbs directly into the blood beneath the skin."

His partner said, "You think they'll make it back to their house?"

"It will screw it up if they don't. I'm not about to scrape them off the pavement."

Always wise, Steve and Laura limped home.

He lay on their king-sized bed and watched the angels dance on the ceiling, while Laura showered and almost, nodding off while she stood, drowned. She sputtered and coughed and gave it up, dragging her limp, soaked body to her side of the bed. Steve hadn't undressed except to unbutton the top two notches of his dress shirt. They slept.

And Steve moved in a dream.

Someone was saying to him: "At first, this will be intensely painful. You will feel a burning in your arm as if a long needle has been thrust up a major vein, and then the burning will run up your arm and through your neck and jaw as if you were suffering a heart attack. But feel no fear, it will pass."

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Steve wanted to wake then, wanted to scream *stop, this dream is too painful, and I feel I have no control.* But the pain, as intense as it was, wouldn't come through his clenched jaw. It was as if his jaw muscles were tightened like a clamp, shutting his mouth forever.

"You killed in Vietnam, is that correct?"

"I shot at targets," he was able to answer slowly. His lips felt thick, extending beyond a thicker tongue.

"This will not be that much different."

"I won't kill again," Steve said.

The man's voice was like a bright hot light at the center of Steve's soul: "Yes, Steve, you will. You can and you certainly will. Again and again, wherever your government points you."

The voice felt like God, like Mother and Father, and, oh, he would be so lonely if he disobeyed, lonely and a bad bad boy likely to be punished, and he suddenly wanted to please so badly. "Yes," he said, "I will."

Movement again, as if in a smooth but fast-moving limo, then what felt like being rolled on a gurney. All his senses seemed dampened, turned inward to the color red, the color of the man's voice. Except for his sense of smell. That was sharp. He caught a whiff of high octane fuel, an uncapped caustic smell he recognized from old wars, and he smelled, incredibly, steel walls and leather seats and knew, if he could only pry his eyes open a crack, that he would see the interior of a plane. But he couldn't, could not see anything but that hot red light in his center, as if he were a tiny child under a red alien sun, transfixed, caught in the webs of light which streamed and spoke: "Now, Steve, listen."

"Yes, listen," he murmured.

"As time goes by, you will gain more control of this feeling you have. At some point in time, in the future, you may even awaken some morning and know who you are and what you've done. But that won't come for quite a few missions yet."

"Missions yet," he repeated. Only the voice of God mattered. He was happy to repeat His voice.

Another shot of pain, in his other arm, a sharp spike which entered him almost sexually, expanding him, bringing to every fiber, to every nerve cell in his body, life. First his toes, bare he realized, wriggled on their own. Ten tiny fingers of life, tingling, alive to the nail which felt new and almost detached, sharp as a razor claw on some hunting bird, pared to points with nerve fibers on their tips. He could even feel the individual hairs standing up from his toes like tiny trees, follicles which sniffed the air

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like tendrils mounted on the heads of some alien ten-headed snake. The serpents of feeling. And the feeling crawled its way up his calves, hardening his thighs— they felt like iron—the quadraceps suddenly powerful and ready to run, to leap. The strength extended to a momentary thrill in his groin; he was erect like a teenager on his first big date; and the feeling swelled to his chest where a breath expanded his lungs and pectorals gloriously, the air and new warm blood suffusing his neck, thickening it like a bull in heat, his neck suddenly feeling thicker than his head. And the light changed from red to blue to white. . .and his mind exploded with the need to do. . .to obey, anything the voice offered him as challenge, anything, any way to use this new-found power. He cracked his eyes and saw a red light, a sunset on some far horizon. Or a sunrise. His sense of direction was mixed up and they were high in the sky. To his right, a swept-back wing, black as the wing of a mean crow, dully gleamed, no markings, no identification, as black and meaningless as his name. . .He couldn't remember his name!

His mouth was open, and some long ago memory that seemed to belong to someone else, someone from his past, flashed through the recesses of his mind. He remembered a dentist's chair, and instruments, and gas, and shots to dull the pain, to numb, and the words as a strange man entered behind his family dentist: "I'll take over now." It passed. It was just a glimpse, a quick backwards view into someone else's past, a man he had known, a normal family man with a wife and perhaps a child or two on the way. A tooth came loose, was replaced, one in back, one in front. He could feel them being screwed into his jawbone, could now hear the grinding crunch of material and bone fitting together, the animal to the material.

"There," a voice said. "That will hold him."

And he slept in black bliss.

And he woke on the ground, in strange garb—silky material all black down to his boots, which were soft as the chewed hide of some strange animal.

He was on a hill. Waiting.

The rifle looked futuristic, a space gun from some long lost SF B-movie, with double scope mounted two stories above a double stacked barrel, though it was light as an aluminum feather, a plastic phalange that seemed, as he extended his arms and shouldered the strangely shaped butt, to fit his body like a new part. He'd used this before! The memory of the moment had the impact of a slug between his eyes. He'd been here before!

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He licked at the new tooth in front and the thought passed in a wave of new ecstasy. He could almost feel its contents seep into his jaw, could taste on his tongue the smell of some exotic flower, and he smiled, and peered through the bottom half of the scope, caught the glimmer below of a street, dew speckled, and could almost hear (he thought he heard it) the swish of radial tires as they were squashed beneath the weight of an approaching limousine.

The laser spot caught the man in suit and tie and bowler hat, one red spot between his shoulder blades, and he squeezed, just the gentlest of pressures, on the phallic trigger inside the guard, felt the slight push against his shoulder and simultaneously saw the strike, the separating of flesh of his target's back between the shoulder blades, just the right spot where the bullet would crash and pierce its way between bony ribs and through fat until it found the heart and lungs and exploded, its special soft casing flying apart like an old sun expired, extinguishing the life of the target . . . and the man fell, slowly. Steve thought it was a slow motion dream he was watching from another life; first the knees bending swiftly as if banged from behind with a baseball bat, then the curving forward of the spine, that cracked and now useless bone curved like a fish on the hook, then the fall like a collapsed sack of old parts, the jaw striking the pavement first (he could hear the crunch on pavement), the neck and spine and hips, and finally the legs, which gave a final twitch twice. And then all was still. The target was down, and it had all happened so quickly that the men around him had not noticed his falling and were walking still towards the building the limo had parked in front of; and Steve stood and placed the rifle on his back with its sling across his chest as he began to move, his iron quadraceps pumping faster and faster down the side of the hill . . .

"I had the strangest dream," Steve said to his wife as she rolled over on her belly and rubbed at a sore spot on one hip, massaging there as if to ease the sting of a particularly nasty insect.

"Ouch, I'm so tender," she said.

"And stiff," he answered, standing as if he were made of wood.

He smiled, though, in memory of something at the edge of his mind and one gold tooth gleamed new from the front of his mouth. ■

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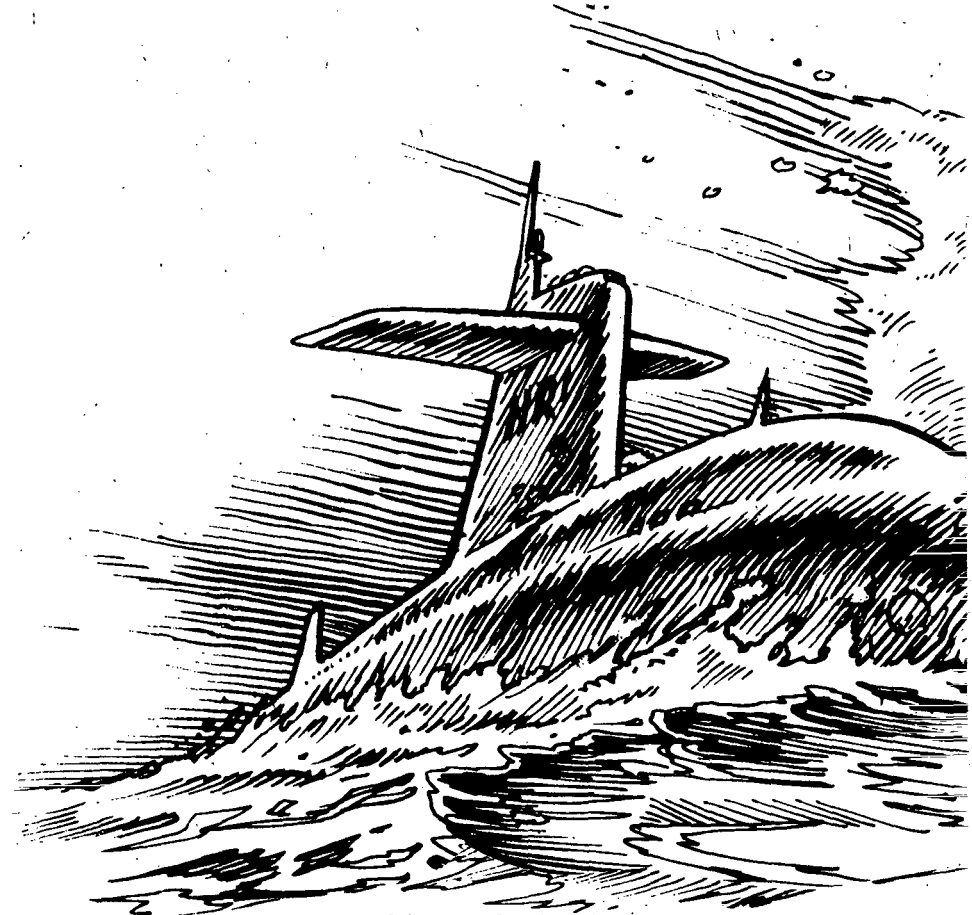

"When any friend of mine is murdered, I want to know why—then I want something done about it." Mr. Deathstone, the elderly Scottish lawyer who had a direct-line telephone connecting his Glasgow office with an obscure British government department in London, paused and cleared his throat. It was an action high on his personal scale of emotion reaction. "This man, George Bishop, was my friend. You understand me, Cameron?"

"Totally," said Cam Gordon quietly.

Outside Deathstone's office window, the sun was shining. It was mid-day and Sauchiehall Street had its usual busy shopping crowds. But inside the room, it was quiet and chill as Deathstone, a thin, stoop-shouldered figure, sat silent for a moment rubbing his long, bony hands one against the other.

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Black Light

by Bill Knox

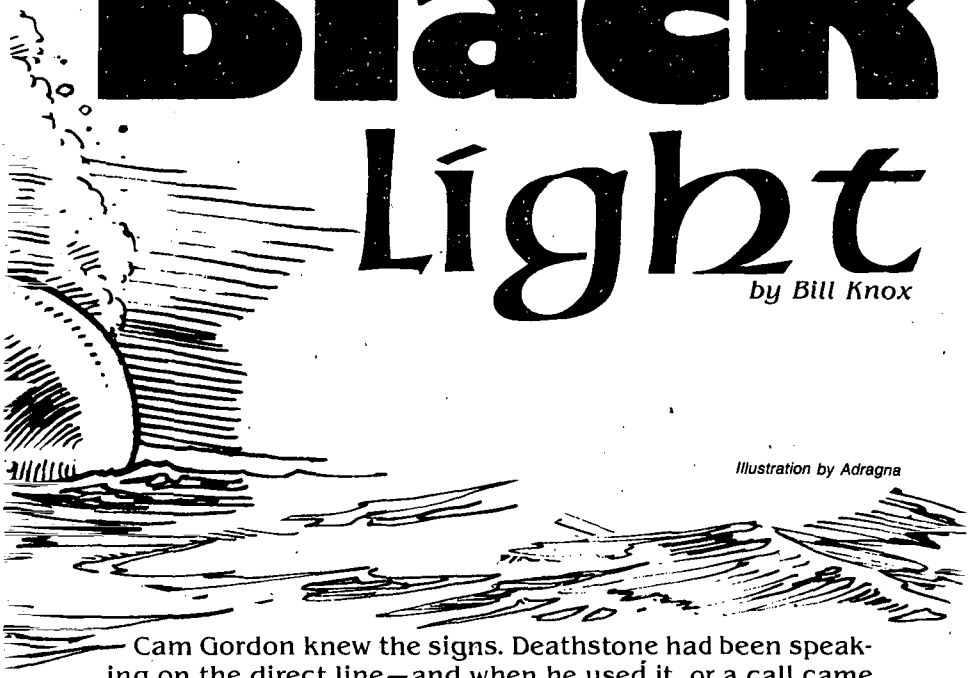

Illustration by Adragna

Cam Gordon knew the signs. Deathstone had been speaking on the direct line—and when he used it, or a call came in, then the old man's long established and highly respected law practice became secondary.

The same held good for Cameron Niven Gordon. Ex-soldier, ex-cop, nudging close to his thirtieth birthday, five foot ten in height, stockily built with dark hair, he ran his tiny but profitable Gordon Investigations Agency from an office across the hallway.

It was Deathstone who had put him there, with a security clearance to match.

"George Bishop." Deathstone came to life again. "He was sometimes reckless, but he was no fool. He came across something, he decided he needed a little more time—then we're supposed to believe he went fishing, instead, and drowned."

"That's what it says in the autopsy report," mused Cam.

"True," said Deathstone curtly. "But there are different ways of drowning."

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Cam nodded and glanced again at the notes in front of him.

George Bishop, a free-lance magazine writer in his late fifties, had lived in a cottage at the little fishing village of Barvieport, on the wild, lonely coast of Wester Ross, far to the north in Scotland. But he also had a Royal Navy pension and had spent years as a naval intelligence expert. A letter he had posted had reached Deathstone two days before news of his death. George Bishop thought he might be on to "something big" and proposed to make an urgent trip south as soon as he had a few more facts.

The same night the letter was posted, George Bishop set off alone in a small boat. He told fishermen at the Barvieport pier that he wanted to try his luck at line fishing off the North Bay. The next morning, an incoming fishing smack found the little boat drifting empty, and a few hours later, George Bishop's body was washed ashore on the white sands of the South Bay.

The South Bay. Someone had made a mistake. If George Bishop had fallen overboard at the North Bay, tide and currents couldn't have carried his body in that direction.

"What's the local attitude?" asked Cam.

"That he must have changed his plans." Deathstone gave a dismissive shrug. "The police are satisfied and my instructions are to let it stay that way. If everyone seems to accept his death as an accident, it may make it easier to get at the truth."

"Where would you start?"

"In Barvieport. There happen to be several defence installations along that part of the coast." Deathstone glanced at his silver pocket-watch. "It's a reasonable road journey from here, about two hundred miles. How soon can you start?"

It was dusk by the time Cam steered his dark green Mercedes along the last stretch of narrow, single-track road towards the little village, the cold, dull grey of the North Atlantic spread behind it like a backcloth. Beside him, big Mike O'Connell stirred to life and lit a cigarette. O'Connell, six feet of fair-haired Glasgow-Irish brawn and loyalty, was a useful companion. But Mike O'Connell made no secret of feeling uncomfortable when the city streets were left behind.

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"How do we start?" he asked again.

"Exactly the way I told you," said Cam patiently, nursing the car round a pot-holed bend. "We're two Inland Revenue officials up to make spot checks on a few local tax returns; that makes us unpopular enough to satisfy anyone and justifies any apparent poking around we do. We've just one contact guaranteed friendly. His name is Lewis; he owns the local garage and runs the only taxi in this part of the world."

He was depending on Lewis. The garage owner was ex-Navy, had even served on the same ship as Bishop at one time, and seemed to be the only person in Barvieport who had doubted that George Bishop's death had been accidental.

Barvieport was a one-street village of whitewashed houses running down to a small, sheltered harbour, where half a dozen small fishing boats and a solitary cargo coaster ship lay berthed and apparently deserted. They drove past Lewis' garage, a corrugated iron hut with two old-fashioned fuel pumps, then stopped at the village hotel. It was a two-storey brick building with a dark slate roof and looked a typical stopping place for travelling salesmen and similar wanderers.

The hotel manageress, a thin, grey-haired woman with a distinctly unfriendly attitude, guided her two new guests to their rooms.

"Will you be staying long?" she asked bleakly. "It's not often we have taxmen visiting this village."

"We just go where we're sent," said Cam mildly. "A few days and we'll be off again. It's a matter of verifying some allowance claims."

She sniffed, considered them with open disapproval, then left.

"Nice welcome," said Mike O'Connell dryly.

"We're the enemy." Cam tried the bed. It could have been made of bricks. "Any self-respecting Highlander will tell you taxmen were created by the devil."

"I know the feeling." O'Connell went over to the window. "When do we go over to the garage?"

"Later. We'll eat first and make some muttering noises across the table. Give the locals time to decide that it looks as if friend Lewis is in tax trouble."

It was a little after eight p.m. when they walked across to the garage, well aware that several faces were watching from

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the windows of the hotel bar.

Lewis, a small, bald, sturdy man, shirt-sleeves rolled up to show a variety of tattoo marks, took them into his little office.

"Sit down." He grinned as he closed the door. "It's good to meet you. I've wanted to talk to somebody who doesn't swallow this business of the Commander being drowned."

"The Commander?" Cam raised an eyebrow.

"That's how I knew him. I served on a destroyer as a petty officer under him, before he got involved in the naval intelligence stuff." Lewis rubbed a hand along his chin. "I'd settled down here, then one day he showed up, out of the Navy. He'd just bought the cottage."

"So you'd talk now and again?" Cam perched on the edge of the garage owner's battered wooden desk.

"Often enough." Lewis frowned. "But I can't tell you anything about what he thought was going on. He just told me there was a nasty smell about something he'd come across, then he borrowed my almanac. He wanted to know when the next really dark night would happen." He saw Mike O'Connell's bewilderment. "You know, when there wouldn't be much of a moon."

"When's that due?" demanded Cam.

"The day after tomorrow." Lewis produced a battered pipe, crammed some tobacco into the bowl, and set it going with a match. "Given some even moderate cloud that night and it'll be as black as the Earl of Hell's waistcoat."

A large scale map was pinned to one wall of the office. Cam turned to it. "Show me what we've got around here," he invited.

"Defence stuff?" Lewis understood and used the pipe stem as a pointer. "There's an oil fuel storage depot about twenty miles north of this place, and an auxiliary fleet anchorage off shore. Go south, to Kerglen, and there's a naval airfield—training, mainly." The pipe stem hesitated then moved again. "Then, nearer here, there's Loch Aongh. Folk around Barvieport call it the Black Light anchorage."

"Why?"

Lewis chuckled. "Because they can't get used to the fact that you can have a lighthouse that doesn't show a light. Loch Aongh is a sea inlet, narrow at first, with a dog-leg turn, but once you're through that it widens out and you've got plenty of deep water. The navy put in a radar beacon near

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the dog-leg turn; no light, just a chunk of electronics that sounds out a signal any ship can pick up. You can't see the signal, but it's there. The Black Light."

"Important?"

"Maybe, if there was a war on." Lewis struck another match for his pipe. "The place is closed to civilian shipping, even fishing boats. There's a corvette stationed in the loch to make sure things stay that way. But the fishing is poor, the channel is tricky, and nobody wants to go there, anyway."

"A fuel depot, an airfield, and your Black Light anchorage. Which would you choose?"

Lewis shrugged. "For what?"

"I don't know," admitted Cam sadly. He got to his feet. "I'd better ask the obvious. Any other strangers arrived in the village lately?"

"Sorry." Lewis shook his head.

They left him and walked back to the hotel. The bar was still busy, but the clink of glasses and the hum of conversation faded as they went in, then picked up again as they headed for the stairway leading to the upstairs bedrooms.

Cam opened his room door, switched on the light, then froze. He'd had a visitor. His suitcase had been emptied on the floor, drawers had been hauled out, and there was a draught from the wide-open window.

"Mice," suggested Mike O'Connell. He went through to his own room, then returned. "I got the same treatment. Uh—think they are on to us?"

"Or nervous of strangers," suggested Cam. "Though it could even be someone with an income tax worry, wanting to see if we had his name on a list."

"So do we make a noise about it?" asked O'Connell.

"No." Cam went over to the window and looked out at the flat roof of an outhouse just below. "It was easy enough done."

He began to turn away, then stopped. The wood of the window frame was rough, splintered in places, in need of repair. One splinter had broken off short, recently enough for the wood to show fresh along the break. A thick strand of black and white flecked wool was caught against its edge. Carefully, delicately, he lifted the strand clear and fingered it.

"Let me see it." Mike O'Connell came over, then frowned. "Could be home-spun, it has that look. Maybe from a fishing jersey? You know, heavy double-knit stuff?"

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Cam nodded and tucked the strand into his wallet.

"I'll buy you a drink," he said softly. "Because I'll bet there's someone in the bar just waiting to see how we react."

They went down to the bar, found a space at the counter, and ordered two beers. The drinks arrived, they paid, and Mike O'Connell happily buried his nose in his glass.

"Finding your way around all right, you two?" The voice behind them was hearty and loud. They turned and a ginger-moustached, moon-faced man in a brown tweed suit grinned at them. "I don't suppose you've had much of a welcome so far. The whole village knows the tax vultures have arrived."

"Flapping our wings as we landed," said Cam gravely. "We're used to it."

"Well, I've a clear conscience—and more important, a good accountant." The stranger introduced himself. "I'm John Whittier, the village dentist."

They shook hands, then Cam thumbed at the rest of the crowded bar area.

"Is this place always busy?"

"No." The dentist shook his head. "But some fishing boats are in. Then that bunch of seamen in the far corner are from the navy corvette at Loch Aongh. They're over to play the local darts team."

Cam nodded. But his eyes weren't on the navymen. At a table near them, two men sat with drinks in front of them. One was wearing a heavy fisherman's sweater in the same black and white flecked wool as the strand he'd found on the window-frame.

Turning back to Whittier, he talked casually with the man for a couple of minutes, then finished his beer. "That's me for tonight." He glanced at Mike O'Connell. "How about a walk down to the harbour, then bed? We've an early start."

O'Connell grunted agreement.

"Sleep well, Mr. Gordon," said Whittier cheerfully. "While you're here, if you need a tooth pulled or anything, just look me up."

They left him and went out into the cold night air.

"You saw our jersey?" asked Cam quietly.

"Marked him straight off," nodded O'Connell.

"Wait around, follow him when he leaves."

O'Connell nodded. "What about you?"

"Bishop's cottage. It's called *breaking and entering*."

Bishop's cottage was a five minute walk away. It was in

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ed, apparently empty. The rear door lock was -fashioned mechanism that yielded to a few probing with a piece of stiff, bent wire. Cam went ed on a pencil-beam torch, and moved from the hen into the room beyond. He moved the torch beam slowly along one wall, then stopped as a stronger, almost blinding light snapped on and shone directly on his face.

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Gordon," said a voice. "I wondered when you'd get here."

"How about lowering that searchlight?" suggested Cam mildly.

He heard a chuckle, then the light pointed down. "Sorry." The man behind it, thick-set, dark-haired, dressed in a grey-blue sports suit, stepped nearer. "We're the same team, more or less. My name is Hanson; I'm with U.S. naval intelligence."

"Like to prove it?" suggested Cam.

Hanson chuckled again. "No problem." He passed over a small, plastic-covered warrant card with a sealed-in photograph.

"An old devil called Deathstone sent you up," he said casually. "Need anything more?"

"No." Cam returned the warrant card. "How do your people fit into this?"

"Maybe we don't. We certainly hope we don't." Hanson left it at that. "My bosses heard you were coming up, passed the word, and here I am. Where's the big fellow who was with you?"

"Trailing a character who turned over our hotel rooms."

"So someone knows about you?" Hanson's face darkened. "Hell, I thought you had a pretty good cover story, coming up as tax inspectors.

"I'd go easy: remember what happened to Bishop." He paused hopefully. "Any ideas in that direction yet?"

Cam shook his head. "Nothing certain. But it could involve one of the naval installations. The only other thing is meeting an unusually friendly dentist."

"Whittier?" Hanson sucked his teeth. "I know him. He's a possible, I suppose. Plenty of people visit a dentist, and that can include seamen. You saw the coaster berthed at the harbour? She's the *Taschen*, East German, and there just happen to be some East German trawlers fishing about forty miles out from here."

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"Any of them taken a trip in towards Black Light Loc queried Cam casually.

"There?" Hanson reacted as if stung. "How does the Blac Light get involved?"

"So far, it doesn't," said Cam. He eyed Hanson. "Would it matter to you?"

"It might. I can't say more." Hanson shook his head. "But there's nothing in this cottage, somebody has made sure of that ahead of us. I'll help if you need me, and if I can, Gordon. Contact me at the British airbase at Kerglen—and do me a favour. Make it straight away if the Black Light anchorage is mentioned." He moved restlessly. "Let's get out of here. The local cop might come along and misunderstand things."

They left the cottage, locked the door again, then parted.

Cam made his way back to the Barvieport Hotel. He found Mike O'Connell waiting for him in his room, stretched out on the bed, his hands clasped behind his head.

"Comfortable enough?" asked Cam sarcastically.

"I didn't know how long I'd have to wait." O'Connell lazily levered himself up. "I did what you asked. Your man with the fisherman jersey left here, went down to the harbour, and went aboard that coaster ship. I watched for a spell but he didn't leave, so I came back."

"I know someone who wouldn't find that a surprise," said Cam grimly. He quickly sketched what had happened at his meeting with Hanson.

"Now the flamin' Yanks," grunted O'Connell, unimpressed. "What's next?"

"Sleep," said Cam. "Get your hulk off my bed."

Next morning, they left the hotel straight after breakfast and headed towards Lewis' garage. They found him frowning over the engine of a Ford station wagon, with John Whittier standing hopefully beside him.

Whittier saw them first.

"Good morning," he said briskly. "We're about finished here. I hope."

Lewis looked up and nodded. "That should fix things."

"I hope so," said Whittier dryly. He grinned at Cam. "Not looking for me, I hope?"

"Maybe later, Mr. Whittier," Cam told him.

"Officially?" Whittier raised an eyebrow.

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"No, as a patient," lied Cam. "When would suit?"

"Early afternoon. The appointment book is fairly light about then." Whittier climbed into the station wagon, started it, nodded goodbye, and drove away.

"What was that about?" queried Cam.

"Ignition trouble. Nothing much, hardly worth bothering about." Lewis wiped his hands on a rag. "But he's interested in you two. He kept asking me what kind of tax trouble I was in, and how much I knew about you." He winked. "I played along with it."

"Thanks." Cam gave him a slight smile. "I need some help, Mr. Lewis. I want to take a boat trip tonight. . .to Loch Aongh."

"It's out of bounds," frowned Lewis.

"That's why we want to go."

"All right." The ex-navyman sighed. "But my boat is the one George Bishop was using when he—when it happened."

"I'm not superstitious," grunted Mike O'Connell. "I just get sea-sick."

It was arranged.

After their garage call, they walked down to the harbour. The East German coaster had gone.

"Sailed wi' the tide at first light this morning," said a grizzled old fisherman, who was mending nets. "Off to pick up cargo somewhere, they said. Then they're heading for home. They won't be back."

They thanked him and walked on.

Early in the afternoon, as arranged, Cam went to John Whittier's dental surgery. It was an attractive old cottage, one wall almost covered by a large, climbing rose bush. It was also only a few hundred yards from the cottage where George Bishop had lived.

"Still chasing our village tax villains? queried Whittier, ushering him in. He settled Cam in his treatment chair, pumped the pedal until the seat was reclined far back, then asked, "Now, what's the trouble?"

"A twinge on the upper left somewhere," Cam told him.

"Let me see." Whittier poked for a moment with a mirror and probe, then stood back. "You've an old filling up there that looks as if it needs to be replaced." He smiled, but not with his eyes. "I'll give you something to kill the pain."

He turned away from his instrument table.

"My regular dentist in Glasgow keeps his radio playing,"

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mused Cam. "He calls it music-while-you-squirm, and says it stops the neighbours from hearing the screams."

"Sorry." Whittier shook his head. "I can't oblige. I haven't got a radio here; this is purely my surgery."

"Then where do you live?" asked Cam.

"I've an old farmhouse. It's inland, about four miles away."

"But you'd still know Commander Bishop?" suggested Cam.

"Yes." Whittier half-turned. "Why?"

"Someone at the hotel told me about the accident," said Cam vaguely.

"A sad business." Whittier came over. He had a hypodermic syringe in one hand. "Now, just a small jab, Mr. Gordon. Small but necessary. No-one really wants to suffer pain, at least, not in my experience."

Cam watched the approaching needle then took a quick glance out of the surgery window. "Just one thing," he warned. "I've only a few minutes to spare."

Whittier hesitated, looked out, and saw the dark green Mercedes parked a little way along the road, with Mike O'Connell behind the wheel. A look of what could have been disappointment crossed his face.

"I don't think I could guarantee how long this might take." He put down the hypodermic. "Maybe you should come again. Let me know when you've more time."

"I will." Cam got out of the chair. "Thanks for the check-up."

"That's why I'm here," shrugged Whittier.

Cam left the dental surgery, reached the car, and sank into the passenger seat with a grunt of relief.

"Anything happen?" asked Mike O'Connell lazily.

"No." Cam drew a deep breath. "Maybe because he discovered you were outside. He was all set to give me a jab, then changed his mind."

"Pity," said O'Connell innocently. "It might have been interesting. Anything else."

Cam nodded. "There's a king-sized antenna wire running up one wall of that cottage, behind the rose bush. It goes up to roof level. But Whittier says he doesn't have a radio."

"Careless of him," said O'Connell. He winked, then started the car.

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The night was dark and the harbour area deserted when, at eleven p.m. as arranged, they met with Lewis again.

His boat, an open fourteen foot clinker-built dinghy with a big outboard engine, was waiting at the outer wall of the harbour. As soon as Cam and O'Connell were aboard, Lewis set it moving with the engine barely ticking over.

But once they were clear of Barvieport, the ex-navyman opened the throttle and the boat gathered speed through the light swell. They steered south, travelling for almost an hour, seeing no sign of any other craft; then at last Lewis allowed the engine to slow down and they began to creep nearer to the coast.

"We're just off the mouth of the loch," he said softly. "See the two headlands ahead? That's where we're going. Once we're beyond them, we're in Loch Aongh."

"What about the Black Light beacon?" queried Cam.

"First there's that dog-leg stretch I told you about; it's a damned nasty shelf of shoal rock. Then straight ahead." Lewis grinned, his teeth white in the darkness. "Funny how things come back to you. I remember Commander Bishop cursing the thing. He had a notion for a spell that the beacon signal was making a mess of his TV reception. He got some patches of hellish interference, 'picture break-up' he called it."

"How often did it happen?" demanded Cam.

Lewis shrugged. "Just now and again."

"Recently?"

Lewis nodded.

The boat murmured on, pitching a little as it met a patch of rough water. Some spray drenched aboard but Cam ignored it.

The television interference which had troubled George Bishop could have had another source, one much nearer to his cottage than the Black Light beacon. A radio transmitter, operated somewhere close by, could have had the same effect. Perhaps Bishop had thought that out, had tried to learn more, and had paid the penalty.

The boat's pitching worsened briefly, then they passed through the black outlines of the two headlands. On the other side, they were in Loch Aongh, and the water became

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calm again—and the outboard engine began to splutter. Lewis worked feverishly but the splutter changed to a hesitant cough, then died altogether.

Lewis swore quietly but fervently, hunched himself over the engine and tried to start it again. Suddenly, Cam gripped his arm and signalled him to stay silent. Another boat was somewhere near, the soft throb of its engine sounding across the water.

"Naval patrol?" queried Mike O'Connell.

"Wouldn't think so." Lewis frowned into the darkness. "Whatever it is, it isn't showing lights."

The throbbing engine came nearer, then a dark outline showed, coming down channel towards them from further up the loch.

"A launch," said Lewis hoarsely. "Don't ask me where she's from, but she's not navy."

The launch murmured nearer, then passed them, heading out. They heard men's voices, caught a glimpse of whitewash from her stern, and then she had gone, her engine note fading as she vanished beyond the headlands.

"Our turn," said Lewis sadly. "I'll get the oars out. We can find our way down to that navy corvette, then do some explaining."

"No." Cam shook his head. "We'll row—but we'll have to make it back to Barvieport. Your boat has to be back in harbour by daylight. I don't want anyone to start asking questions."

"It's a long pull," warned Lewis.

"But he means it," groaned Mike O'Connell. "Let's get started."

It took almost four hours before the dinghy nosed into Barvieport harbour, was tied up, and her weary crew made their way ashore. But a little later, Cam was using the telephone in Lewis' garage, talking to the duty operator at Kerglen naval airfield. Then he had to wait until, at last, a sleepy American voice came on the line.

"What's happened, Gordon?" demanded Hanson. The American intelligence man stifled a yawn. "Hell, do you know what time it is?"

"Early," agreed Cam. "But maybe this will wake you up. Someone's been playing about off the Black Light anchorage. The real trouble could be set for tomorrow night—that's tonight, now. Does that ring any kind of bell?"

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"Where are you?" demanded Hanson tightly.

"At Lewis' place."

"I'm coming over. Stay there."

He arrived half an hour later—a considerable feat of hard driving—took the mug of coffee Cam handed him, swallowed a first gulp, then looked around.

"Where's Lewis?"

"In his workshop," grunted Mike O'Connell. He scowled at his blistered hands. "He's trying to find out what went wrong with that damned outboard engine."

"There's a hell of a lot more to worry about." Hanson slumped into a chair and scowled at them. "You wanted to know about the Black Light channel, right?"

Cam nodded.

"You weren't to be told this unless it was necessary. Now it is." Hanson nursed his coffee mug. "At twenty-three hundred hours tonight, there's a U.S. Navy nuclear submarine going through that channel into Loch Aongh. She's on operational patrol, with a full load of missiles." He looked at them. "So what's going on there? Don't try to tell me it's a welcoming committee."

"I won't." Quickly, factually, Cam sketched his way through their trip to the Black Light channel, including everything that had happened. When he finished, he had a question of his own to ask. "Why Loch Aongh? What's there that matters enough to have that kind of visit?"

"Deep water; and plenty of it." The intelligence officer sucked his teeth for a moment, then sighed. "Look, here's the picture: You British operate your Polaris boats out of Gareloch, on the Clyde. We're down there, too—we use Holy Loch as base on this side of the Atlantic, no secrets there. She hides, she leaves the opposition puzzling where she has gone—"

"And the Atlantic is a lot of water," murmured Cam. It was beginning to make sense. "Go on."

"So it's a hide and seek game that could suddenly be for real." Hanson abandoned his coffee and lit a cigarette. "So maybe we cheat. Every now and again, a missile sub doesn't patrol. It eases up the coast for a spell, lies submerged, stays there, and gives the opposition a nervous breakdown because she just seems to have vanished."

"You've used Loch Aongh before?"

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"Plenty of times. And other places, too. At Loch Aongh, she has to go through the channel on the surface, then dives." Hanson shrugged. "It's always a night run; none of the locals know, and the crew on that British corvette are sworn to secrecy."

"But?" suggested Mike O'Connell.

"But." Hanson drew on his cigarette and scowled. "A couple of months ago, Kerglen Air Base began picking up some unidentified radio signals, pushed out fast in code, and the best they could do was decide that the transmitter had to be somewhere in this area. I came up, but I got nowhere."

"Did you talk to George Bishop?" asked Cam.

"No. I knew about him but my bosses wanted the lid kept tight on this one." Wryly, Hanson shook his head. "Well, that was their mistake."

"What about Whittier?"

"He set up shop in Barvieport a few months ago. They needed a dentist; he was like a gift as far as the locals were concerned."

"And it put him right in the centre of things," agreed Cam softly. "But—"

He left it there as Lewis came bustling into the room. The garage owner looked excited and had a small, torn sheet of sodden paper clutched in one hand. Hanson sniffed, then quickly stubbed his cigarette.

"Gasolene." He stared at Lewis. "What's going on?"

"This." Lewis carefully spread the fuel-soaked piece of paper on the table in front of them. "This is what made the boat engine cut out last night. It was in the fuel tank, blocking the outlet." He glanced at Cam. "There's a map on it . . ."

They crowded round. The paper seemed to have been torn from a notebook; the markings were still clearly legible. Hanson swore under his breath. "Bishop was the last man to use your boat?"

Lewis nodded. "Before we did. You think maybe he had to hide this in a hurry?"

Hanson and Cam looked at each other with the same unspoken thought, then turned to the torn sheet of paper again.

It was a rough drawing of Loch Aongh, with that distinctive dog-leg entrance between the two headlands. Three small crosses had been marked inside the loch area, one of them circled and with an arrow pointing north. A scribbled

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line on the inside of the dog-leg channel marked shoal rocks.

"There's your blueprint, Hanson," said Cam grimly.

Hanson nodded, tight-lipped.

"Blueprint for what?" demanded Mike O'Connell.

"Wrecking one nuclear submarine. Leaving it high and dry like a stranded whale," Cam told him. He glanced at Hanson. "That would make a few people happy."

"Plenty." Hanson said it bitterly.

Lewis was puzzled, unsure of what was going on. But Mike O'Connell stared at them in near horror. "That sub! You said she'd be loaded with missiles." He swallowed. "What about them?"

"No." Hanson shook his head quickly. "That wouldn't be any kind of danger, and the nuclear plant side would be safe enough, too. But it would set every anti-nuclear lobby howling for blood."

"All right!" O'Connell was relieved and showed it. "But I still don't understand—"

"The crosses," said Hanson patiently. He tapped the rough map in front of him. "This one in the middle is the Black Light radar beacon, and when that's activated it sends out a pulse signal. The other two are plain, ordinary radar reflectors—call them marker guides—just metal plates mounted on scaffolding.

"Any submarine commander coming in lines up on the beacon, then holds a course midway between the markers. He's coming in on radar, right?"

O'Connell nodded, then understood. "So if one of those marker things was moved—"

Hanson nodded. "Your commander still steers that midway course but it takes him straight into trouble."

"That's how it is," mused Cam. "Like a switch-off, but worse. Now, what do we do about it?"

The answer involved a surprising number of people in a very short time, though not all of them ever learned why they were asked to do certain things.

It began at about ten a.m., when Cam Gordon and Mike O'Connell checked out of the village hotel with the explanation that a new, urgent tax inquiry meant they had to head further north.

Ten minutes after the green Mercedes left Barvieport, Lewis had a visitor at his garage.

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"I hear the tax vultures have gone." Whittier, the dentist, stroked his ginger moustache. "Did they give you a rough time?"

"Rough enough." Lewis played his part well. "They're hitting me with an extra tax bill." He sighed. "Well, now, Mr. Whittier, more car trouble?"

"No, everything's fine." Whittier shook his head. "I just thought I'd let you know." He turned to leave. "Oh, the tax vultures; where are they heading?"

"Far away," scowled Lewis. "Let's hope they stay there."

Whittier chuckled and left, and as he drove off Lewis went to the telephone.

Thirty miles out over the North Atlantic, a naval aircraft from Kerglen Airfield, diverted from routine patrol, spotted the coaster *Taschen* ambling along on a time-killing circular course. Her position was noted and a radio message to Kerglen ensured other flights would check her progress.

The afternoon passed. Then, as dusk greyed in, another aircraft reported that the *Taschen* had begun steering in towards the coast.

Soon afterwards, Whittier drove his car out of Barvieport. Half an hour later, he was watched as he boarded a small launch at Malan, a fishing village fifteen miles to the north.

By then, his surgery had visitors. Mike O'Connell flexed his fingers; probed gently with a claw-shaped sliver of metal, and eased open the lock on a metal-fronted door they'd found hidden behind an old-fashioned bookcase.

"And that settles it," murmured Cam as the door swung outward. Dentists didn't usually have a small but high-powered radio transmitter as part of their tooth-pulling kit.

Hanson was with them, almost cheerful again as he shoved a collection of papers and handy little items, like a micro-dot enlarger, into a canvas bag.

"Hurry it up," Cam told him. "We're not finished."

"Okay." Humming under his breath, Hanson made a last check. Then they were on their way.

Using the tide, the American SSBN was due to make its surface run through the Black Light channel into the deep, calm waters of Loch Aongh at 2300 hours. With one hour to go, a small group of men waited in the darkness, sheltering in a grass-fringed sand hollow a few yards from the tall, slender pillar of the north shore radar marker. Beyond it, they could make out the gentle slope of the beach and sense

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as much as see the cold, lapping water. Out there somewhere, they knew, the radar beacon had already been activated and was sending out the Black Light's steady, invisible signal.

Cam Gordon crouched with Hanson beside him and Mike O'Connell within whispering distance. The other figures around them wore khaki and hugged weapons, a Royal Marine detachment from the British guard frigate. According to George Bishop's map, the North Shore marker would be the target, but another detail of Marines were similarly positioned on the South Shore, as a final precaution.

The minutes dragged on. Occasionally, a man stirred or there was a faint clink of metal on metal. Hanson began to check his wrist-watch, worried again.

Then, at last, the soft, muffled throb of a launch engine reached their ears. It came nearer, then died as the boat drifted in and grounded lightly on the shallows. They heard splashes, then the crunch of feet on the sandy shingle. A moment later, half a dozen figures appeared out of the night and gathered round the foot of the radar marker.

The young Marine lieutenant waiting near Cam gave a hand signal. A magnesium flare soared up and poured a cold, almost blinding light on the scene, and with a sudden yell, the Marines charged forward.

Panic kept the men on the beach frozen for a moment, then they tried to scatter. One dragged a revolver from his waistband, triggered it wildly, then was knocked over and down, to stay that way as Hanson and the Marine lieutenant crunched into him.

The others were already being mopped up in a series of brief, individual chases and struggles. Mike O'Connell already had his own prisoner and was frog-marching him back.

But one man was clear, running hard along the beach towards the grounded launch. It was Whittier. Cam sprinted after him, followed by a burly Marine corporal.

The launch engine was bellowing as Whittier reached the shallows. Then it fell silent. The man left aboard had discovered the boat was firmly grounded.

Whittier hesitated, glanced back, then headed off at a tangent.

"Take the one in the boat," Cam told the Marine corporal.

The man nodded, splashed on through the shallows with

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his rifle at the ready, and Cam pounded on after the runaway. Gasping for breath, Whittier stumbled, almost fell, then Cam tackled him low and brought him down.

"No—" Desperately, Whittier swung his fist and took Cam hard on the side of the jaw.

Dazed for a moment, Cam clung on, changed his grip, then butted the dentist hard in the face. Before Whittier could recover, Cam chopped the edge of his hand down in an axe-like blow behind the man's left ear.

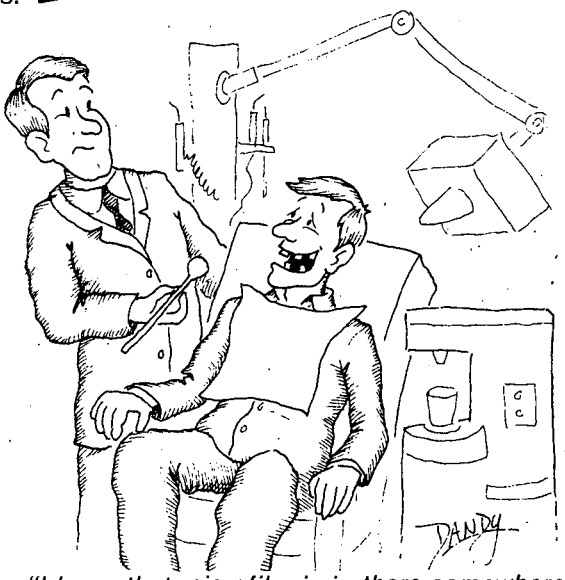
Whittier slumped and lay still. Panting for breath, Cam got to his feet. A green rocket burst high overhead, then another answered from outside the channel. The SSBN was ready to begin her run into the anchorage.

Feet crunched across the beach and Hanson ambled to join Cam. "That's done it," grinned Hanson. "I'd say our troubles are over."

"Yours, maybe," said Cam ruefully.

"Huh?" Hanson blinked. "What's wrong?"

"I faked toothache to get inside Whittier's surgery," said Cam sadly, and rubbed a hand where Whittier had caught him on the jaw. "Now I've got the genuine article, and I've just put the only dentist within fifty miles totally out of business." ■



"I know that microfilm is in there somewhere."

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PUFF The Magic Dragon

by Michael W. Masters

"I tell you, I don't like it," Roosevelt Jackson insisted adamantly. "It sounds too damned *dangerous.*"

Dean Wheat frowned in exasperation, his face flushed beet-red from more than just the heat of the Equatorial African sun. He pulled a crumpled handkerchief from the pocket of his sweat-stained seersucker suit and wiped moisture from his brow. "Of course it's dangerous. But that arms shipment *has* to get through to the rebels. If it doesn't, the rebels may go under—along with the President's entire central Africa policy." He turned his attention from the black man to his disheveled and faintly amused companion. "How about it, Humboldt? You haven't said a word. You're the pilot. You're the one who has to make the decision."

Jake Humboldt scratched two days worth of stubble on his chin and leaned back in the creaking cane chair. He pulled his droopy-brimmed bush hat low over his eyes, shielding them from the torrid sun that beat down from a cobalt blue sky. He wore dirty army camouflage fatigues and a pair of scuffed boots. An automatic pistol filled a holster on his hip. He drummed his fingers absently on the table.

"Rosie's right," he said evenly, speaking just loud enough to be heard above the hubbub of Manimba city traffic and native merchants hawking their wares around the open air cafe where they sat. "The way the White House has been leaning on the Carturma regime at the UN lately, they're boiling mad right now. I hear they're patrolling the border regularly."

"Aw, come on, old son," Ross Crandell interrupted. His Navy

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Illustration by Dan Scontras

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khaki shirt had lost its starched stiffness, the armpits were darkened with sweat, but he ignored the heat with easy nonchalance. "So what if their whole air force is on alert. What have they got, anyway? A few old, obsolete recon jets converted for fighter duty? Stuff like that never bothered you in Nam." He took a pull on a can of beer and set it back down, waving at a passing waiter for another round.

"Besides," he continued, "you can't let a sissy like Wheat here insult your manhood. He's a spook, for Christsake! All he ever does is sneak around in the dark, peeking in real people's bedrooms. You've got to do it to uphold the honor of the fraternity of fliers." The waiter delivered more beers, and his eyes grew wide at Crandall's words. Wheat shot him a dirty look and he hurried away.

"Knock off that kind of talk, Crandall," Wheat hissed, glancing at the waiter's back. "What the devil are you trying to do, blow my cover? Officially, I'm on the embassy staff."

Crandall grinned lopsidedly and made a sweeping gesture that caught the thronging crowds of Africans, clad in mud-stained brown robes and bright, flower-patterned dashikis, surging past the cafe. "Baloney. Nobody can hear us. The safest place in the world to hatch a plot is right out in the open, where nobody can hide."

"That's easy enough for you to say," Humboldt said mildly to Crandall, ignoring his exchange with Wheat. "You spend your time over the ocean in the nastiest hardware Uncle Sugar's money can buy. And you've got half the Sixth Fleet within shouting distance if you can't cut it. *Puff* is all Rosie and I have."

"Yeah," Jackson growled. "And besides, them Carturma dudes ain't no pushovers. I hear they got the latest Soviet heat-seeking missiles. Not even a hot pilot like Jake here can dodge that kind of stuff in a cow like the *Dragon.*"

"But that's what I'm trying to tell you dopes. Sixth Fleet isn't laying off the coast just to frighten the bejeebers out of Carturma. Oh, we'll do that all right, surer'n hell. But we're here to cover *you.*"

"Man, you been smoking funny cigarettes again," Jackson laughed scornfully. "You better watch out. You're gonna look down one day and find out you're flying without a plane under your fanny."

"How's that again?" Humboldt added, his eyebrows lifting perceptibly.

"Crandall's right," Wheat said urgently. "Simola and his rebels

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are *hurting* the Carturma regime. The brass back at Langley think they may have a better than even-money chance to topple the leftist government. But the Soviets have upped the ante, dumped in a lot of new weapons lately. Now the rebels desperately need something to cut the edge. The Administration has decided to commit our latest shoulder-fired antitank and antiaircraft weapons. Decided all the way at the *top.*"

"He's telling you the gospel truth, old son," Crandall grinned. "This operation has top priority. The Navy is going to conduct a little 'show of force' just about the time you hit the border. We ought to draw off every aircraft they've got. All you have to do is fly low through the mountains, hugging the valleys all the way to avoid their radar, and make your drop. Piece of cake. I personally guarantee it."

"And just where are we supposed to make this drop?" Humboldt asked.

Wheat shook his head. "Not even I know that. Simola keeps the location of his headquarters a complete secret, even from us. He'll slip an agent out to let us know the location at the last minute, to avoid the chance of a security breach."

"Hmm. Can't say that I blame him. Er, not that I'm really interested, you understand, but how much green is Uncle willing to part with to deliver the goods?"

Wheat named a figure.

Jackson's eyes grew round. "Whoowhee! Man, with that kind of bread, we can retire."

"Yeah—if we live long enough to spend it," Humboldt mused. "Still . . ."

"Then you'll do it?" Wheat asked anxiously.

Before Humboldt could answer, a battered old Renault roared around a corner. Frightened natives scattered before it. The car clipped an ox-drawn cart and dumped the driver onto the street. The four men turned to stare. As the car neared, a window rolled down and sunlight glinted off gun metal.

"Jeez! *Get down!*" Humboldt spat out, diving for the tile floor. His companions followed him. The car slowed and machine gun fire ripped the air, bullets riddling the cafe. Customers bolted in terror, men and women screaming and scrambling for cover. Some, caught in the deadly hail of bullets, staggered and went down.

Humboldt rolled sideways, shielding himself behind a huge concrete flower pot containing a palm tree. He looked quickly around and saw Jackson huddled behind an overturned table, gun in hand. He caught Jackson's eye and the black man nodded.

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Humboldt pulled his own pistol from his holster, peeked around the base of the flower pot, and squeezed off three quick rounds in the general direction of the car. He ducked back as the machine guns swept in his direction, chopping the palm tree to bits and showering Humboldt with stinging fragments of concrete.

Jackson raised up, aimed carefully, using both hands in the manual-approved manner, and fired. A man screamed inside the car, and one of the machine guns shut up. He fired again, shattering glass beside the driver's ear, and suddenly the car screeched into motion, its tires hurling clouds of dust behind as it picked up speed and careened away. Humboldt aimed at the departing vehicle, then thought better of it as civilians came into his line of fire.

He stood up and dusted powdered concrete and dirt from his clothes. He looked around. Several patrons lay sprawled on the floor, soaked with blood and crying out in pain. Nearby, people began to stand up tentatively, and in the distance, strangers stared, afraid to come near, but too mesmerized to run away. A rising babble of voices filled the air.

"You okay, Jake?" Rosie asked.

"Yeah. Nice shooting, pal—as usual."

The black man grinned in embarrassment. "Aw, hell. I should have gotten the driver with the second one."

"Maybe it's a good thing you didn't," Ross Crandall said, joining the pair. "They still have one machine gun left. I think I would rather have them getting away."

"Where's Dean," Humboldt asked.

"He's over there hiding behind the table," Ross said sarcastically. "You know what sissies those guys are. You can come out now, Wheat," he added, raising his voice. "The action's over—Yo, Dean! You still with us?"

The CIA agent lay face down in the dirt, blood pooling beneath his head. Humboldt stepped past the Navy pilot and bent over Wheat's still form. He rolled the man over onto his back. Wheat's eyes stared back at him sightlessly, his forehead marred by a single bullet hole.

"Damn!" Jackson exclaimed. "Right between the eyes! Hell of a lucky shot with a machine gun, if you ask me."

"Not so lucky for him," Humboldt said grimly, releasing his grip on the dead man. In the distance, sirens wailed. "And there'll be the devil to pay as well when the news gets back to Langley." Police cars arrived and cops poured forth, guns at the ready.

"Put away your pieces," Crandall said to the first cop, a sergeant.

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"You got here a little too late. The party's over."

The man took in the scene. "Get an ambulance," he barked to a subordinate. "No, make that two or three—and a hearse," he added, glancing at the corpse on the floor. "You are Americans. I might have known. All you ever do is bring trouble. Suppose you tell me what you had to do with what happened here," he said to them.

"Whoa, chum," Crandall said. "We're the intended victims, not the bad guys."

"You might put out a bulletin on a beat-up old blue Renault," Humboldt interjected.

The African cop frowned then moved away to call in the alert. He returned and began to question them.

"That's enough, Sergeant. I'll take over now."

They turned to see a stocky man walking toward them. He was distinguished by a prematurely gray head of hair and a still-brown mustache.

The cop started to protest. The newcomer flashed a diplomatic passport. The cop shrugged and moved away.

Humboldt eyed the man with distaste. "What are you doing here?"

The man looked around at the carnage. "I'm here to straighten out your mess," he said sarcastically.

"Who is this bird?" Ross Crandall asked tersely.

"Just something the skunk dragged in—ain't no other animal can stand the smell of him," Jackson muttered, wrinkling his nose.

"Still a man of low breeding, I see." The man spoke disdainfully. Jackson started toward him, but Humboldt put out a hand to restrain his friend.

"Do you know him?" Crandall asked.

"Yeah," Humboldt said. "Regrettably. Freddy Steinke—'Stinky' to all his friends. Of which he has none. Freddy, meet Ross Crandall, USN," he said, completing the introduction. "Freddy was in Army Intelligence in Nam—a mismatch if ever there was one. Anyway, I pulled him out of a mud bog, half drowned. He had been wandering around lost for three months after an operation went sour; still haven't figured out how he managed to avoid the Viet Cong that long. And then the leech had the nerve to put me up on charges when I didn't bow quite low enough to suit him. 'Insubordination,' I believe it was; wasn't it Freddy? I should have left him in that swamp. I didn't know they sent you out on field work anymore, Freddy. Somebody kick over your rock and let you slither out?"

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Steinke's eyes narrowed. "You never were much of a soldier, Humboldt. One of these days your mouth is going to get you in more trouble than you can get out of."

"There was never anything wrong with my soldiering, Freddy. I just don't like little tin gods. And any time you want to try me, say the word."

They stood glaring at each other.

"Just what *are* you doing here?" Crandall interrupted.

Steinke broke off the staring contest. "Now that Wheat is dead, I'm taking over the mission. I presume he told you what we want?" he added. "Though I can't see why he picked you."

"Yeah, he told us, all right," Jackson growled menacingly. "But what makes you think we're interested? Or that we'd do it for you, even if we were?"

"That's about what I would expect of you," Steinke snorted. "Let a friend get shot up and just walk away from it. You two are nothing but scum. I could have told Wheat that."

"Why you dirty—" Jackson snarled. He lunged at Steinke. A nine millimeter automatic appeared in Steinke's hand. Jackson stopped short, his face twisted with rage.

Humboldt pulled his friend back. "It isn't worth it, Rosie. Besides, the vermin is right," he said heavily. "We've got to do it—for Dean."

Jackson remained tensed for a moment longer, then he sighed and relaxed. "All right. But when we're through, I'm going to settle the score with this piece of trash."

Steinke smiled mockingly as he put his weapon away. "That's more like it. I want you at freight hanger number seven at the airport at nine tomorrow morning. You can load up the goods there. Then stay close to the phone. Once Simola's guide shows up, we go." He turned on his heel and strode away.

"That crate looks like it's on its last legs. I'm not sure I'd risk going up in it," Ross Crandall drawled with a rueful shake of his head. He nodded at the dumpy old two-engined, camouflage-painted C-47, military cousin to the venerated and ubiquitous DC-3. It sat in front of a dingy hanger in the freight service area of the Manimba airport, looking for all the world like something from an old movie. Airport people moved around completing the job of loading bulky, unmarked boxes onto the plane. Jackson, Humboldt and Crandall stood by, waiting for them to finish.

"You got no faith," Jackson grinned. "The *Dragon's* still got

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a lot of miles left in her."

Crandall looked unconvinced. "How did you guys get your hands on a military plane, anyway?" he asked.

"We liberated it," Jackson said, with a chuckle.

Humboldt grinned. "The Air Force used a lot of these crates in Nam. Used to leave them sitting around by the dozens, shot all to hell. Easier to fly in a new one than to patch up one full of holes. Kept all the Defense contractors back in the States rolling in green. Anyway, about the time my tour was up, I got myself into a poker game with the supply sergeant in charge of the scrapyard and a flight mechanic who didn't know the odds against filling an inside straight. So, well, one thing led to another and here we are."

"That's no damn explanation. You haven't told me anything!"

"What he means," Jackson finished, "is that he cleaned them out. Clipped them for a couple of months' wages, besides. Got the supply clerk to surplus one of the least shot-up planes in return for cancellation of his debt, and he got the flight mechanic to help us refit it with pieces from the rest of the planes on the lot."

"You *stole* it?" Crandall said in disbelief.

"No such thing!" Humboldt denied. "We saved the *Dragon* from the torch. A month after we shipped out, the VC overran the area. The army just doused the whole lot of them in aviation fuel and struck a match to 'em."

"Harumph. I'm not sure I see the distinction. Look, I hate to rush off, but I've got to scoot. They are expecting me back at the *Eisenhower* this afternoon."

"Sure, Ross. Good luck."

"There is one more thing. . ." He led Humboldt around the side of the hanger. He picked up a suitcase-sized metal instrument case and handed it to him. "Wire this into your radio, old son. Might come in handy if you get in a tight spot."

Humboldt accepted it. "What is it?"

"It's a crypto scrambler, tuned to one of the *Eisenhower's* frequencies. If you run into anything heavy, give a squawk. I'm going to spend as much time upstairs as I can. If you need help, I'll bring the cavalry. Flight ops will patch you through immediately."

Humboldt's eyes narrowed. "Wouldn't an incursion like that cause an international incident?"

Crandall flashed a lopsided grin. "The Op Order didn't say not to. Besides, I won't shoot anything down, just scare the pants off them. We'll deny the whole thing happened afterwards."

"Let's hope I don't need it."

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"Yeah. Well, if they bite for our bait you shouldn't have any problem. But I'd hate to see an old buddy get caught up Shit Creek without a paddle." He turned to go, then stopped. "One more thing—I don't know if it's important, but it has generated a lot of classified message traffic from CIA headquarters at Langley since they found out."

"What is it?"

"The bullet that killed Dean Wheat wasn't the same caliber as the machine gun slugs the police dug out of the walls at the cafe where we were ambushed."

Humboldt digested this. "It's important, all right. It could mean that the attack was simply an attempt to hide the fact that he was being murdered. Whoever did it didn't count on an autopsy."

"But who would have murdered him?"

"I don't know. In his line of work, it could be anyone. Thanks for letting me know."

"Jake—"

"Yeah?"

"Be careful." He turned and walked away across the concrete apron.

Humboldt watched him go, and for the first time he felt butterflies in his stomach. He handed the crypto device to Jackson. "Wire this into the radio circuit," he said, frowning.

At their hotel, Humboldt and Jackson split up and headed for their rooms. The hotel was a dive, a run-down building in the less desirable—but cheaper—part of Manimba. Humboldt unlocked the door and stepped inside.

"Close the door, Mr. Humboldt," a voice said from the shadows. "Slowly and gently so as not to make a loud noise." A black man stood in the darkness behind the door. He held a pistol pointed unwaveringly at Humboldt's waist.

"What's this all about?" Humboldt asked carefully. He pushed the door closed but refrained from turning the latch to relock it. If Rosie happened along, the distraction might be enough to—

"I'll ask the questions here, if you please," the man said. "Unbuckle your gunbelt and lower it to the floor." Humboldt complied. "And just so we understand each other, if you make the slightest sudden move, I will blow a hole in your stomach large enough to put my fist through. Understood?"

Jake found that he had been unconsciously tensing himself for a possible attack. He relaxed. "You're calling the shots. What do you want?"

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"Tell me about the enterprise you have planned."

"Enterprise? I'm here on vacation, pal."

The man pulled back the hammer of the pistol and held it out at arms' length, pointing it straight at Humboldt's head. "Don't annoy me, Mr. Humboldt. I know all about your little arms running operation. And your loose alliance with the CIA."

Humboldt shrugged. "If you already know it all, why are you asking me?"

"Shut up," the man snapped. "You try my patience. I know about those things, yes. But I know about your duplicity, too. I mean to find out who is behind it."

"Huh? What the devil are you talking about?" Humboldt blurted, genuinely puzzled.

"Don't bother to cover up. I want to know who set up this plot."

"What plot? You aren't making any sense."

The man snorted. "Of course I am. I'm talking about the—"

A gunshot exploded in the cramped room. The man staggered, blood pulsing from the carotid artery in his neck. He turned to the door. Freddy Steinke stood there, a smoking pistol in his hand. A look of surprise crossed the black man's face. "You—" he whispered faintly, coughing blood. Steinke fired again. The shot slammed the man across the room. He sprawled on his back against the wall, dead.

"We're even now, Humboldt," Steinke said, moving across the room to check the man for pulse. "You saved my life once. Now I've saved yours." He searched the dead man's pockets. Finding nothing, he stood up. "What's the matter? Can't the great Jake Humboldt stand being in my debt for a change?"

Their eyes met and locked. Humboldt said nothing. Slowly Steinke colored. "I said—"

Roosevelt Jackson burst into the room, waving his gun. "What in hell is going on?" He took in the tableau: Humboldt and Steinke staring at each other, Steinke with pistol in hand. "Why, you swine. Just say the word, Jake, and I'll finish him off."

Steinke laughed without humor and nodded toward the body on the floor. "Aren't you being a little hasty, Jackson? Can't you see I just saved your friend's life?"

Jackson gave the body a quick look. "Is that right, Jake?" Humboldt shrugged. Jackson shook his head in puzzlement. "Well, I'll be damned."

Humboldt's eyes narrowed. "Just who is—was—this guy, Freddy? I had the feeling he knew you. And how did you happen to arrive on the scene at exactly the right time?"

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"He was a menial on the embassy staff. He's been suspected of being a KGB agent, operating with Carturma, for some time. I'd say this just about cinches it. And as for me, I dropped in to tell you that our guide has made contact. We take off this afternoon."

He turned to go, then stopped and added, "Call the meat wagon for that one," nodding toward the corpse. "I've got better things to do." He disappeared.

They met at the airport an hour before sunset. This time, a gaunt and dirty African, dressed in torn, filthy bush clothes, accompanied Steinke. "Our guide, Cabot Timuri," he introduced him.

"Simola and all of our troops appreciate your help," the man said in surprisingly precise English.

Humboldt and Jackson shook hands with the guide. "Did you set up the rest of the plan, Freddy?" Humboldt asked.

Annoyance edged Steinke's voice. "What are you talking about?" he snapped.

"This is a coordinated operation, remember? There's a small matter of the Navy part to set in motion."

"Don't tell me how to run an operation, Humboldt. Get on board and get us out of here." Steinke led the way up the ladder and into the aircraft.

"He's a real sweetheart, isn't he," Jackson muttered sarcastically, as he brought up the rear, dogging the hatch closed.

They strapped in and Humboldt ran through the instrument check quickly. He pushed ignition switches and the engines coughed, then roared into life. He checked in with the tower, received clearance to take off, and taxied out toward the end of the runway. Humboldt opened the throttles wide, the engines revved to a shrill whine, and the plane rolled down the runway into the late afternoon sun. He pulled back on the stick and they were airborne.

He climbed quickly, then banked to the right and circled the city, giving everyone a crow's eye view of Manimba. They soared over the uniquely African crazy-quilt mixture of old and new—mud huts and dirt streets within sight of modern glass-and-steel skyscrapers. Ox-drawn carts and automobiles alike crept along, ant-sized specks from the air. At last, he swung the nose south and began the climb to cruising altitude. The sun caught mountain peaks to the south and bathed them in golden flame. Mists rolled across the jungle below, shrouding the landscape in dark mystery.

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Timuri and Steinke occupied the cockpit jump seats behind Humboldt and Jackson. Tension hung in the cabin. Each man sat silent with his own thoughts.

The cargo-laden craft climbed sluggishly, vibrating and straining upward. "Come on *Puff,* you can do it," Jackson urged.

"What did you call this plane?" Timuri asked.

"Puff. Puff the Magic Dragon."

"Why on earth did you choose that kind of name?"

Jackson leaned back. "That's an easy one. In Nam, they called all planes like this by that name. We used them for close fire support to the ground troops. Not just these old crates either; we used C-119s and other stuff, too. We mounted Gatling guns—Miniguns we called 'em—in the cargo bay door, where we could get a clear field of fire. Those suckers pumped out five thousand rounds a minute, on call, anytime, day or night."

"Jackson threw a switch and a wicked looking, multi-barreled machine gun pivoted up out of the floor."

"I thought you used helicopters for that. You know, helicopter gunships."

"We did. But you can carry a lot more fuel and ammo in a regular plane like the *Dragon.* We could stay on station for five or six hours at a time. The troops loved us. I guess they hung that name on us because we were all the time breathing fire on the Viet Cong. Ain't much can stand up to the sleet the *Dragon* can dish out. Later in the war, they started putting cannons on-board, so they could stand off further. Installed a cockpit aiming system so the pilot himself could do the flying and the firing all at the same time. Seemed kinda sissy to me."

"Rosie's not kidding about the damage those Miniguns could do," Humboldt added. "We were damned good truck killers, too. And Rosie was just about the best gunner in Southeast Asia. He could hit anything. Once he took a chunk out of a North Vietnamese jet that got too close."

"Shot it down?" Timuri asked incredulously.

"Not quite. But it was trailing smoke when it headed back to

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the north."

"I'd have gotten him if I'd seen him sooner," Jackson muttered. "But I didn't see him till he was almost on us! Wasn't expecting him. Usually their stuff didn't make it that far south."

"Want to see a demonstration?" Humboldt asked.

"But how? There isn't anything back there except cargo," Timuri asked.

Jackson laughed. "Well, now. We can't exactly leave it out in plain sight, can we?"

"Quit playing games," Steinke snapped. "Nobody wants to see your toy in action. Besides, you aren't supposed to have that kind of weapon. When we get back I'm going to—"

Humboldt turned around in the pilot's chair and fixed the CIA agent with a cold glare. "Stuff it, Freddy. I've put up with just about all the trash out of you I'm going to. Next time you open your mouth, I'm going to let Rosie toss you out the door."

Steinke turned red and started to speak. Jackson grinned at Humboldt and eyed Steinke inquiringly, his hand on his seatbelt. Steinke sat back, his lips drawn into a thin line.

Humboldt took the plane down to a few hundred feet above tree top level. Eventually they reached a clearing. "See that tree? The one by itself?"

"Sure."

"Let's go to the back." Humboldt put the plane in orbit over the clearing and set the instrument board on autopilot. They moved into the cargo area and the two men folded panels out of the floor, revealing a cavity beneath. Jackson threw a switch and a wicked looking, multi-barreled machine gun pivoted up out of the floor, driven by hydraulic pistons. Quickly, Jackson located a cartridge strap and fitted it into a slot on the side of the gun.

"Dragon's breath, coming right up," he shouted above the wind as he opened the mid-ship door. He grinned like a thief as he cranked the first rounds into their firing chambers by hand. He donned ear muffs and sighted down the barrel at the landscape below.

"Hold your ears," Humboldt commanded. Timuri complied. The gun erupted with a deafening staccato roar that shook the entire plane, kicking it sideways in the air. The sound assaulted the body as well as the senses, like a jackhammer operated at an impossibly high rate. The burst lasted scarcely two seconds, then it was over. By comparison with the gun's awful cacophony, the sound of the engines and the whistle of wind rushing by the door seemed almost gentle.

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"Take a look," Jackson grinned, removing the ammo strap and shipping the gun into stowage position. Timuri crept forward and peered out the door. The wind slowly wafted a cloud of dust away below, revealing the devastated shards of the tree. Hardly a piece remained big enough to be seen from the air. Startled birds took to wing in panic.

"What a weapon!" Timuri breathed in awe. "You wouldn't consider flying support for our forces, would you?" he asked hopefully.

"Sorry. I did my bit for peace and freedom in Nam," Humboldt said dourly.

"So? Too bad. However, now I know what we must ask your government for next." He moved forward to the cockpit.

The plane droned on for an hour on a heading laid down by Timuri. Gradually, the smooth jungle canopy below gave way to foothills, then towering mountain peaks, rising from fog and shadow-shrouded valleys. Humboldt kept the plane just above the peaks. Once he swerved violently to avoid a peak that loomed suddenly out of the mist.

"Do you have to fly so low?" Steinke barked. "I want to complete this mission alive."

"Lose your nerve in Nam, Freddy?" Humboldt said sarcastically. "We're about fifteen minutes from the border. I'd rather take my chances running into a mountain than attracting a Carturma air patrol." He turned to Timuri. "You want to give me some idea of how to navigate?"

Timuri unstrapped himself and moved forward between Humboldt and Jackson. "We will follow the Nibulata River for the time being. Turn east by fifteen degrees. It should be easy to spot."

"Roger that." Humboldt banked the plane to the new heading.

"Seems like we've played this game before, in the Mekong Delta," Jackson said. He strained forward and scanned the landscape below. Minutes later, he pointed off to the right where a ribbon of silver gleamed in the twilight recesses between mountain peaks. "There she is." Humboldt nodded and took the plane down even lower, dipping between ghostly peaks that slid by on either side, gliding at slow speed above the fog-covered river channel. Below, startled animals splashed frantically out of the water and into the jungle.

"What are you doing?" Steinke demanded.

"Keeping a low profile."

"I forbid it! Get this aircraft back up at once."

"What are you worried about?" Jackson interjected. "Jake's the

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best bad-visibility pilot in the world. He ain't gonna dump your carcass into no hillside." Under his breath, he added an aside to Humboldt: "Can I throw him out, now?"

"Nah. He isn't worth working up a sweat over."

"I'm not kidding. Get this plane up," Steinke ordered harshly. Humboldt turned to respond—and found himself facing the muzzle of Steinke's pistol.

"Humboldt makes sense. Why do—" Timuri began. Steinke swung the gun to cover him as well.

"Keep your advice to yourself. I'm in charge of this operation. We'll do it as I say."

Humboldt pulled the nose of the plane up, then leveled its flight several hundred feet above the mountain peaks. He took a deep breath and forced aside his rising pique over Steinke's high-handed behavior. This was no time to give in to anger. He needed to keep a clear head. Mental alarms were nagging at him, though, and he was determined to pull the thread and see where it led.

Steinke had to see the virtue of staying low to avoid detection, and no one who had worked behind-the-lines intelligence in Viet Nam could be a coward. He wasn't afraid of flying into a mountain. Ergo, he had some other reason for keeping them up high. *But what?* Humboldt let his mind wander loosely over things that he knew, knowing that his subconscious could not be forced by direct command to reveal its suspicions. Then, like the tumblers of a lock, the pieces fell into place.

"Hey, Freddy, when did your hair turn gray?"

"You know damn well it happened in Viet Nam," Steinke snapped in annoyance.

"Yeah. So it did. As I remember, you went into that busted operation with brown hair—and came out with gray. The VC scare you that bad?"

"Shut up."

"Must have been tough hiding out in the jungle for three months, living by your wits. Couldn't turn yourself in to local villagers, either, because you never knew which ones the VC had in their pockets."

"I said *shut up!*" Steinke bit out.

"You going to shoot the pilot?" Humboldt taunted. Steinke snarled wordlessly. "Speaking of shooting, do you CIA guys keep up your marksmanship qualifications?"

"Don't push me, Humboldt. I'm a crack shot—with any weapon."

"Mmm. Figures."

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"What is that supposed to mean?"

"Not a thing, Freddy." Humboldt caught Jackson's eye. He nodded down toward his stick, waggling the wheel ever so slightly—the plane rocking slightly in response—then rolling his eyes back toward Seinke behind him. "Looks like we're in for some turbulence," he said nonchalantly. Jackson slowly released the clasp on his safety harness, taking care to keep tension on the straps. He nodded imperceptibly to Humboldt.

Suddenly, Humboldt yanked violently on the stick and hit the pedals. The plane bucked and nosed up, simultaneously yawing and dipping the left wing. Jackson flung himself from his co-pilot's seat, propelled backward and to the left by Humboldt's maneuver, onto Steinke. The gun roared shatteringly in the cockpit, drilling a hole in the windshield. Jackson grappled for Steinke's hand. The gun cracked again, then Jackson pinned Steinke. He drew back a massive fist and smashed it into Steinke's face. The CIA agent slumped back dazed.

Timuri groaned in the other jump seat. "Hey, Jake. Timuri's hit."

Humboldt leveled the plane out and turned. Blood soaked the rebel agent's shirt front. "Take the stick, Rosie." He swapped places, accepting Steinke's gun in the process. "Can you talk?" he asked the wounded man.

"Yes," Timuri whispered. Humboldt checked the location of the wound. The man was as good as dead.

"Where are we going?" he asked urgently.

Timuri whispered incomprehensibly. Humboldt placed his ear close to the man's mouth. Timuri tried again, struggling to get the words out. "The river forks soon. Take the left fork for fifty miles. There is a gorge that rises on the right side to a plateau. Flash your running lights over the plateau. Simola will light flares to guide you—"

"One more thing. Did you have an agent in the U.S. embassy?"

Timuri's voice was a rattle. "Yes." He spat blood then sagged limply in his straps.

Humboldt placed a hand on the man's neck. "Dead."

"What the devil's going on?" Jackson asked in puzzlement.

"This whole operation has been nagging at me ever since Dean bought it. Finally, it hit me. Subconsciously, I've been wondering how Freddy showed up so quickly after the shooting; he practically beat the local cops to the scene."

"Don't seem strange to me," Jackson growled. "Vultures just naturally flock to dead meat."

"Hmm. But even vultures follow their noses; they don't have

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ESP." He paused to let the words sink in. "Did it ever strike you as odd that Freddy could survive for three months in the Viet Cong infested jungle without getting caught?" he asked. He knew from Steinke's glare that he had hit paydirt.

"Yeah, come to think of it, it does seem far-fetched," Jackson mused.

"The truth is, you didn't manage to avoid capture, did you?" Steinke said nothing. "I've heard of men so badly frightened that their hair turned gray almost overnight. Is that what really happened to you, Freddy?"

Steinke looked away. When he looked back again, his eyes held the wild look of a trapped animal. "You can afford to talk, Humboldt," he spat out. "You have no idea what they can do to a man. The pain—"

"You didn't have to keep it up once they let you go and we picked you up." Steinke stared wordlessly.

"For an endless moment, Humboldt's head hung out the door over nothingness."

"That's what I thought," Humboldt growled disgustedly. He suddenly swung viciously, landing a blow on Steinke's jaw. "That's for Dean Wheat. Why did you kill him?" When Steinke said nothing, Humboldt held the gun to his ear. "You're living on borrowed time, pal. Spill it."

"I had to get control of the operation. Killing Wheat was the quickest way," Steinke hissed. He glared malevolently at Humboldt.

"Why did you want control of the operation? Does it have anything to do with the reason you killed Simola's agent? What kind of plot was he talking about when you shot him? That first slug in the neck was well-placed, wasn't it? It kept him from telling us what he knew. And just what was he on to? What kind of double-cross are you pulling?"

Steinke said nothing.

"Jake, take a look at this," Jackson called. He banked the plane and pointed. High up, fading sunlight-lit specks moving against the sky.

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"Company. The Carturma Air Force, no doubt. I count half a dozen."

Jackson nodded.

"It figures. That explains Stinky's mission. We're an unwitting Trojan horse. Our job is to lead Carturma's troops right to the rebel hideout," Humboldt said with a grimace. He approached Steinke. "How were they supposed to keep tabs on us, Freddy? Is that why you wanted to fly above the mountains—to make sure their radar could track us? Are you hiding anything else we ought to know about?"

"Drop dead," Steinke snarled.

Casually, Humboldt backhanded Steinke, snapping his head against a bulkhead sharply. Quickly, Humboldt patted down the man. "Aha." He ripped off Steinke's shirt, revealing a belt with a small radio transmitter strapped to the man's mid-riff. He yanked it loose.

"Rosie, did you get that scrambler wired in?"

"Yeah."

"Good." Humboldt fired up the radio. "Hey *Ike.* You listening? Patch me into Commander Crandall, Air Wing. Pronto."

There was a brief, static-filled pause, then Crandall's voice came on the radio. "Hey, old son. You're not supposed to use this circuit until the operation starts."

"Look, I hate to break this to you, but the operation is already under way. And we need a little help."

"What?"

Quickly Humboldt filled the Navy flier in.

"I'll be airborne in ten minutes. Give me your coordinates."

Humboldt complied.

"Hang in their, pardner. See you in a jiffy."

"I hope we're still here. Out."

Suddenly, Steinke lunged forward and grabbed the belt transmitter. He lashed Humboldt, sending Humboldt to the floor and the gun spinning away. Then he smashed the belt against the bulkhead. The device scattered in pieces. He grabbed a parachute from a rack and clambered toward the cargo bay. Humboldt watched dumbfounded, then dove after him. He caught up with Steinke at the cargo bay door. Steinke had gotten it open and was struggling to put the chute onto his back.

Humboldt hit him at the knees and they rolled on the floor, clawing at each other for advantage. Steinke landed a kick in Humboldt's stomach. Staggered, Humboldt crouched on the floor in the open doorway. Steinke lunged at him, trying to shove him

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out the opening.

For an endless moment, Humboldt's head hung out the door over nothingness. The wind whipped viciously past his ears. Steinke pushed relentlessly and Humboldt felt himself starting to slide. He clutched at Steinke desperately—and found his hand on the chute release. He tried to grab it . . . suddenly the parachute popped open, fluttering and filling in the rush of air past the doorway. The cloth snaked out the door, sucked out by air pressure, and Steinke screamed as his body shot through the doorway. The plane bucked and yawed as the tail sideslipped.

Humboldt looked out the door to the rear of the plane. The tip of the rear wing was sheared off. Remnants of the parachute fluttered from it briefly, then disappeared into the gloom. Steinke's fate was obvious. Humboldt suppressed the urge to retch and made his way forward.

"Did he get away?" Jackson asked.

"Yes. And no." Humboldt explained.

"Serves the bastard right," Jackson growled. "But why did he bust that tattle-tale?" he said in puzzlement.

"Take a look." Humboldt pointed out the windshield. High above, silvery specks peeled off and dropped. "With the tracking signal gone, our escort must know something has gone wrong."

"Shit fire," Jackson swore. "What're we gonna do now?"

"Play tag. And we're *it,*" Humboldt said grimly. "Hang on." He slipped into the pilot's chair and put the plane into a steep dive, leveling out only feet above the gleaming river bed. Jets roared by a hundred feet above, then pulled up and swung around for another pass.

"We're sitting ducks," Jackson lamented.

"I know. Do we still have a Very flare pistol?"

"Yeah, I think so. Why?"

"The flares might decoy the heat-seekers in their missiles."

"It's worth a shot," Jackson exclaimed. "Try to get us sideways to their line of attack so I can see what's going on." He headed for the cargo bay. Moments later, his voice came over the intercom. "Swing us around. I think they're coming in from the rear."

Humboldt put the plane in a climb. He banked left, as soon as he dared, just barely clearing a peak in the process. "How's it coming?"

"Bird inbound," Jackson's voice shouted over the roar of air rushing past the open cargo bay door. Humboldt looked out the side window and caught the glare of a rocket motor boring in on them. Suddenly, the missile swerved and passed below.

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"You do that, Rosie?"

"Yeah, man! Hey, take us back down for a minute. I need a little time to do something here."

"Are you crazy? Time we haven't got." Nevertheless, he dove for the deck again as the jets screamed past overhead.

"Now. Take her back up. Bring them suckers on," Jackson's determined voice roared over the intercom.

"I hope you know what you're doing." Humboldt climbed and put the plane in a tight circle, desperately scanning the sky for their attackers.

There!

He leveled out broadside to the inbound jets. Another missile stabbed toward them. Suddenly, the plane vibrated violently as the Minigun cut loose. Tracers filled the sky with pyrotechnic light, walking their way toward the missile, then through it. It shuddered and veered, shedding pieces and dropping away. Humboldt watched in fascination as tracers moved out in dreamy slow motion and intersected with one of the jets. The twilight sky lit up blindingly as the aircraft exploded in a spectacular fireball.

"WAHOO!" Jackson's voice whooped over the intercom. "Bring her around again. I'm on a roll!"

The radio circuit crackled with Ross Crandall's voice. *"Jake?* For God's sake, answer me. Are you still there?"

"You betcha!" Humboldt yelled exultantly. Navy F-14 Tomcats slashed overhead at Mach two, afterburners shrieking and lacing the night sky with streams of fire. A thunderous sonic boom shook *Dragon* like a rag doll.

"Stand down, old son. We'll take it from here. Say, who's supplying the fireworks?"

"Uh, you probably won't believe it but Rosie's been breathing a little *Dragon's* breath on them."

"Wonders never cease. Tell him that was good shooting—for an ex-Air Force man."

"You tell him. He's bigger than I am.

"Rosie, stow that thing and get up here. Let's figure out where we are and finish the drop."

The Navy fighters screamed away in pursuit of fleeing Carturma jets. Moments later, in the distance, a series of explosions glowed on the horizon.

Shortly thereafter, they were over flares twinkling in the jungle below.

The drop completed, Humboldt swung the plane north. A single

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Tomcat fell in beside *Puff* a hundred yards to port.

"Scratch the Carturma Air Force," Crandall's voice drawled. "Hey, can you speed that tub up? I'm about to fall out of the sky. I may have to put my landing gear down if we go any slower."

Humboldt laughed and cracked the *Dragon's* throttle open a notch. "I thought you weren't going to shoot at anything."

"I lied," Crandall said modestly.

"Well. . .thanks, pal. I take back all the bad things I ever said about you Navy pilots."

"Sho 'nuff. Hey, I'll buy you guys a beer sometime and we'll compare notes. Meanwhile, can you fellows handle things now, or do I need to nursemaid you back to port?"

"Uh, I think we can handle it."

"So you can, old son. So you can. Adios." The fighter nosed up and climbed away with incredible acceleration.

"So long, yourself. And thanks." Humboldt whistled off-key as he checked the compass. "Hey Rosie, pass me the charts. I'm going to figure a course to Tangier. This place is the pits."

"Ain't you going back to Manimba to pick up our check?"

"Nah. They'll just think up something else for us to do. I'll call and have a money-order forwarded. I feel like a vacation. How about you?"

Jackson flashed white teeth. "Damn right! Tangier, huh? Just a short hop to the Riviera. Seems like I remember a certain lady in Cannes. . .Be nice to have something besides your ugly mug to stare at."

Humboldt smiled absently and banked the plane to a north by northwest heading. He compared his course to the positions of emerging stars overhead. Satisfied, he resumed his tuneless whistle. The *Dragon* droned into the African night. ■

Did you know...

The world-wide Boy Scout movement had, as its founder, an English cavalry officer named Robert Baden-Powell. He became the hero of Victorian England when he defended the beseiged town of Makefing, in South Africa, in the Boer War. His creation of the Boy Scout movement owed much to ideas he put together during that seige, when he organised local young people into a messenger corps.

But the same Baden-Powell had already had a successful career as a spy. Many of the hints in his handbook, *Scouting for Boys*, were things he'd learned the hard way in the espionage world—though he didn't tell those future generations of young Scouts how useful it can be to act drunk or go around in disguise.

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At Mafeking, Baden-Powell played a wide variety of tricks on his Boer opponents. He used megaphones to make them think troops were on the move, he built dummy artillery guns, and laid a "mine-field" of wooden boxes filled with sand.

But his earlier espionage career had even wilder moments. He was one of a generation of young officers of every nation who, craving excitement, turned to amateur spying as a way of finding excitement as well as information. Sometimes it happened in the line of duty, but as often as not they asked for leave and did it on their own time.

Baden-Powell's favourite espionage cover was to pose as a water-colour painter on a tourist trip. Using that disguise, he spent one summer wandering the coast of Algeria. His pictures of coastal scenes concealed carefully coded details of new defences around several ports. He switched to an interest in butterflies when he went to Dalmatia. Local police took only a mildly amused interest in the shabbily dressed Englishman who painted butterflies, but little lines on the wings of the butterflies represented the plans of fortresses. Dots beside them represented their guns.

His most daring exploit took him to Berlin, again posing as a harmless tourist. He'd learned that a new machine-gun was being tested on a military range; he wanted to see it. A sentry challenged him, raised a rifle ready to shoot—and Baden-Powell promptly went into his drunk act, producing a bottle of brandy and offering the sentry a drink. The sentry was glad to get rid of him, and Baden-Powell got back to Britain with the information he'd wanted.

NEXT ISSUE

INTERVIEW with David Atlee Phillips, 25 years an agent for the CIA.

"OPERATION VENGEANCE"—The aerial assassination of Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto: the man who designed the attack on Pearl Harbor.

"PERSONALITY FACTOR"—A science fiction story by Ardath Mayhar.

"STRANGERS IN TOWN"—A new adventure from Joe Gill.

PLUS

PERCY SPURLARK PARKER MICHAEL BRACKEN

MEL WALDMAN

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Hello

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Again

by David P. Grady

As the cab pulled away from Valley Hospital, Alex Donovan was amazed at how steady his nerves were. It was a long time since he had felt so calm and secure. Perhaps it was because he had reached a definite decision after six years of fear and doubt. And yet his decision was not absolutely definite. He did not expect his visit with Janet to change anything; he'd still be a cripple. But maybe she wouldn't care. He was no longer with the CIA, which is why she had walked out on him ten million years ago. There was no harm in trying; he had to see her.

They had grown up next door to each other, on the fringe of a ghetto, with the glass towers of the rich rising high and mighty in the distance. Alex Donovan and Janet Hardin, two peas in a pod.

Now they were over thirty and had not seen each other for ten years. There had always been a playful, comfortable warmth between them, and time for sex, but never any talk of love and marriage.

It was two o'clock on a sunlit afternoon when Alex stepped out of the cab in front of her house, a red-bricked bungalow with a freshly cut lawn and neatly trimmed sticker bushes along the walk. He stood for a moment, transfixed by a pair of white-hooded sparrows searching amid the grass cuttings for nesting material. Finally, in a flutter of wings, they disappeared into a stand of cottonwood. He walked up to the front door, hesitated, and then knocked.

Janet came to the door. She was wearing a bathrobe, blue and fluffy, and Alex could tell by the look on her face that she was more than a little surprised to see him.

"Alex!" she exclaimed.

"Hello, Janet," he said. "Long time."

She didn't say anything. She just stood there, a blank stare on her face, and Alex was suddenly shy and unsure of himself. But he mustered his courage and winked at her.

"Want to go on a picnic?" he asked.

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"A picnic?"

"A picnic. You know, sandwiches, a little wine."

"What are you doing here?" She was suddenly. . .wary. "I had no idea you were in town."

"Just passing through."

"You still with the agency?"

"No," he said. "I quit a few years ago."

"Want to come in?"

Alex shrugged, then smiled. He followed her inside and sat down across from her at the kitchen table. "Nice place."

"Want some coffee?"

"I'd rather not," he said. "Let's go on a picnic."

"I'm really not up to it, Alex," she murmured. "I've been awful tired lately."

"If we go on a picnic," he coaxed, "it might help. We'll go over to Baxter's orchard. . .swipe some apples like we used to." He reached out and touched her hand. "Why not? You could probably use a little of the old times right now."

"I don't know." She was almost whispering, her head down. Then she looked up at him. "I guess you heard about Will."

"Read about it," he said. "I'm sorry."

She took her hand away. "Is that why you're here?"

"Let's go on a picnic." He smiled at her. "We'll talk about it."

"I loved him, Alex."

"I know."

She twisted her fingers together. "We had a fight, but I loved him."

"I know."

"Will raced out and got drunk," she said. "They're pretty sure he fell asleep at the wheel."

"That's what I read," said Alex. "It happens."

She wrung her hands and started crying. "I loved him, Alex. I really loved him."

"Take it easy. It's not your fault."

She wiped the teardrops from her cheeks. "I heard you were somewhere in Central America. Was it bad?"

"It could've been worse," he said.

"Crazy world;" she shook her head. "I'm glad to hear you quit."

"Get dressed." He took command. "Let's go on a picnic."

"But why?" she asked.

"Because I love you," he said. "Now, will you get dressed?"

Janet burst into tears. She stood up and turned her back to him, buried her face in her hands. Alex got up, walked over to her, and put his hands on her shoulders. "I've always loved you. Always."

Janet turned around, slowly, and took a backward step away from him. "Oh, Alex," she moaned, "that's crazy. You don't want me. Not now. Not after. . ."

"Why not? Because you were married? Because we drifted apart . . .went our separate ways? Janet, look, it happens."

"You don't love me," she said. "How could you?"

"I do."

"But why now? You never talked this way before."

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"I would've, but . . ." He caught himself, unsure of how he could say what he wanted to say without starting the old argument.

"But, Alex, you were a spy!" she blurted out. "A spy! There was no place for a wife or a girl in your life. It was too dangerous. I told you not to go."

"Yes," he said, "you did. But I had to give it a try. Criminal law just didn't excite me enough. I wasn't ready for it . . . wasn't ready to set up shop, to sit on my duff and be stuck in one place. The world was there, Janet. I had to see it."

"It was too dangerous, Alex."

"I know that, now," he replied.

"Well . . . I'm glad you quit . . . b-but it's just too late for anything, Alex."

"Is it?"

"I'm sorry to disappoint you."

"I'm not disappointed," he said. "I wasn't counting on it. This is nice, just talking."

"It is?"

Alex moved closer. And he did what he had to do: He kissed her.

"It's too late," she repeated, when Alex let her go. "We're different people. Ten years is a long time."

"Let's go on a picnic;" he spoke as if he hadn't heard her at all.

"Where?"

"Baxter's orchard."

She grinned. "Why there?"

He grinned. "You know."

"Oh, Alex," she cried, "don't be silly. There's no reason to go back there just because . . ."

"We made love there," he cut in quickly. "We didn't call it that, but that's what it was . . . love."

He kissed her again, and this time she kissed him back, a warm, wet, opened-mouth kiss that brought back memories of Baxter's orchard. He pulled her in tight and let his hands go to her buttocks. She didn't resist.

"You called it a good healthy screwin'," she whispered, when Alex gave her a chance, "and that's all you want now. Am I right?" She moved away, went back to the table and sat down. "You don't love me." Her voice was firm. "You just want to play house."

Alex sat down across from her. "You're wrong, Janet. I do love you. I've always loved you."

She shook her head. "Sex, Alex. You read about Will and now you're here to make things worse." She bit her lip. "I can't do it," she said. "I'm sorry, but I'm not going to do it without love. I never have."

"So you admit it?" He jumped on her words.

"Admit what?"

"That it *was* love . . . that you loved me when we did it in Baxter's orchard."

"I loved you," she admitted, after a long pause, "but then you left me to join the agency . . . to go play spy. I had to force myself, Alex, to fall out of love . . . and Will was part of it. And it worked; it really worked, Alex."

"I love you." He spoke quietly, with a tremor in his voice.

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There was a longer pause. Janet was shaking her head. Alex was losing his nerve. Then she looked directly into his eyes, a small smile on her face. "We could date, Alex. I mean, we could go out once in a while."

Alex knew then that Janet could still be in love with him. But there was one more thing he had to know: Could she love a cripple?

"We'll date," he agreed softly. "But there's something you ought to know." He reached over and squeezed her hand and then he stood up. "I was going to show you something out in the apple orchard. I thought maybe the atmosphere would lessen the shock . . . sort of put good memories in the way of disaster."

"Bad news?"

"Yes," he said, "it could be. . . for us I mean. There's something I want to show you. I could tell you about it but it's kinda hard for me to talk about it. May I show you?"

She stared up at him for a long time, as if she was on the verge of saying something, but hesitating. Then she nodded.

"Right now I can't tell you where it happened, but I was caught. . .captured." Alex opened his trousers. "They tortured me," he went on. He pulled down his trousers, then his shorts. "And what they did to me cost me six years in a hospital. I was hurt pretty bad." He stood there, exposed, with his legs apart and his hands on his hips.

Janet was staring at his groin, at skin that was wrinkled and dead, shriveled, pale. . ."My God!" she gasped, and pushed herself up from the table.

Alex, from the waist down, was scarred and horribly mutilated; each testicle had been reduced to a mere lump of knotted flesh and his penis was twisted and deformed, an irregularly-shaped fold of pallid skin.

"The price I paid for seeing the world." His voice was husky. "Half a man. Nothing to offer a woman in bed, and no children." He pulled up his shorts and trousers. "You were right, Janet, it was too dangerous."

Janet went over to the kitchen sink and poured herself a glass of water. She turned around. She smiled prettily at him and then emptied her glass in one long swallow.

"Alex?"

"What?" he managed to say, his heart pounding.

"Hello."

"Hello, Janet."

"Want to go on a picnic? I'll get dressed?"

"I'll wait," he said. ■

SPY TALK: *Cover Name* - a "working name" used on a false I.D. or other "identifying" papers.

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Did you know...

More than 46 years after it took place, a highly secret World War II mission by the United States has come to light in some newly-declassified documents.

The documents reveal that in 1940, shortly before the fall of France, President Roosevelt ordered the American cruiser *Vincennes* to steam secretly to Le Havre. There, the ship loaded the entire French gold reserves and, after eluding a massive attempt by the Gestapo to locate the billions of dollars worth of gold, sailed back to the United States. The gold was offloaded in even greater secrecy and hidden at Fort Knox until the end of the war, when it was returned to France. The mission was one of the first major operations of American intelligence in Europe—and one of the most successful.

All persons connected with the cruiser and the gold-smuggling operation were sworn to secrecy. The secrecy was, however, aided by a tragic event: in 1942, while in action off Savo Island near Guadalcanal, the gallant *Vincennes* was sunk by the Japanese, with heavy losses. Most of the killed were men who had participated in the gold-smuggling operation two years before.

Probably the most innovative exploit in espionage history was carried off by a French spy who posed as an infant.

The spy's name was Richebourg. He was 23 inches tall, a midget who worked as a servant for the Duchess of Orleans, mother of the future King Louis Philippe of France. When the French Revolution erupted in 1789, the House of Orleans was cut off from its Royalist friends and allies in Paris. A spy was desperately needed to pass information to the Royalists in Paris and report back on activities inside the city. It was then that the twenty-one-year-old Richebourg volunteered to be the spy.

Richebourg, dressed in infant's clothes and carried by an Orleans maid posing as a nurse, passed by the armed guards at the gates of Paris. The ruse succeeded time and again as the midget, cradled to the bosom of his "nurse," conveyed military dispatches in and out of the city.

At the end of the Revolution, Richebourg moved to the Saint-Germain quarter of Paris. From the exiled Orleans family, he received a pension of 3,000 francs a year. He lived as a recluse through the reigns of Napoleon Bonaparte, Louis Philippe, and part of the reign of Napoleon III. In 1858, the *London Times* printed an obituary upon his death at the age of ninety.

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HOLY WAR

by Frank Laffitte

The stockade was a barbed wire enclosure two hundred yards from the barracks and administration buildings that seemed to billow and tremble in the waves of heat rising from the desert. Both men walking toward the stockade wore dark glasses; the security man wore a western suit and hat, the camp C.O. a kaffiyeh with his khakis. As they approached the fence, they could see the punishment boxes.

"How long has he been in there?" asked the security man,

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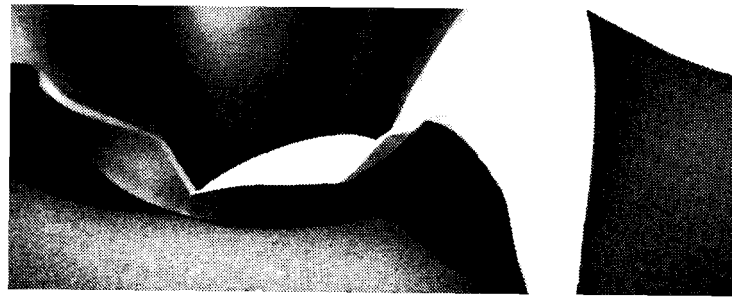

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whose name was Mamluk.

"Three days," said the C.O. Mamluk gave him a look. "He has resisted milder disciplinary measures," the C.O. added.

A guard saluted and opened the gate for them.

"Let the Tuareg out."

The guard ran to one of the small wooden boxes, unbolted the door, and dragged out a body. They walked over to inspect it. Incredibly, after lying on the ground a few seconds, it began to move.

"Stand up," the guard said. "Stand at attention." He gave the nearly dead man a nudge with his boot and the man lunged upward, sending the guard sprawling in the sand. The guard jumped to his feet and unslung his rifle, but the C.O. said, "That's enough."

The man stood up. The C.O. asked him, "Are you now ready to serve Allah and your country?"

"I serve Allah," said the man in halting Arabic with a heavy Tuareg accent. "As for this country, if I had spittle enough I'd show you what I think of it."

"That's too bad. Now I must put you back in the box and cut your water ration. Are you sure you won't reconsider?"

The Tuareg tried feebly to gather saliva in his parched mouth.

"What's your name?" asked Mamluk, the security man.

"Yusuf Kabyl," said the Tuareg.

"Yusuf, you don't want to be in the army?"

"No."

"Why not? Are you afraid of fighting?"

Yusuf swung a fist at Mamluk, who easily caught it.

"Why not, then?" Mamluk asked.

"Because you have no right. You make us all slaves in the name of freedom. You have no right."

"How old are you, Yusuf?"

"Eighteen."

"Would you stand in the way of the Colonel's plan for a totally armed people?"

Yusuf made a lewd suggestion about the Colonel.

"Would you be willing to die for your beliefs, Yusuf?"

"As long as I can take one or two of you swine with me."

Mamluk nodded. "Very well, Yusuf. If you feel that way, we'll send you back to your tribe. The *Jamahiriya* has no need of unwilling soldiers."

"If you will excuse me, Minister," said the C.O., taking

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Mamluk by the arm and leading him a few steps away. "What are you trying to do? Do you know what effect it will have on morale if this man is sent home? I'll have a mutiny on my hands."

Mamluk shrugged. "If you cannot release him, you cannot. I'm only trying to follow the Colonèl's orders." He took a folded memo from an inside pocket and handed it to the C.O.

"Well," said the C.O., "I suppose the Colonel knows what he's doing."

Six weeks later, Yusuf walked with Mamluk across the echoing marble floors of the former royal palace to a large cozy office overlooking the capitol complex. A man in officer's fatigues sat at a desk staring straight ahead. There were papers on the desk, but he was not reading them. He seemed to be daydreaming, and even after they came in he made no sign of having noticed them. He held himself stiffly, as if acting. At first glance, he looked like an idiot, but this was deceptive. The Colonel was quite shrewd. But insane. Only after a full minute had passed did he frown, tilt his head to the side so that he could look up at them, and say, "Yes?"

"Colonel, this is Yusuf Kabyl," said Mamluk. "He is the one who petitioned to see you."

"Colonel," said Yusuf, "I wish to fight for the *Jihad*."

The Colonel's frown deepened. "Are you not the one who did not wish to fight?" he inquired, as if he kept track of every one of his subjects and knew them all by name.

"Colonel, I was wrong. I beg forgiveness. Give me a chance to prove myself."

The Colonel stood up and walked to the window, frowning even more painfully in an almost successful attempt to suppress a smile. Mamluk could see a faint reflection of the smile in the window but the boy, Yusuf, in his despair, was beyond perception.

"It was a sin, what I did, Colonel," said Yusuf. "Allah has punished me. One day, not long after I returned to my tribe, soldiers came, enemies of the state, and tried to force us to go with them to fight against our homeland. When we wouldn't, they shot the women and children. My mother. My little sister. We could do nothing to stop them. And these enemies—I know who they are, because our own soldiers,

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who came later, told us. They were Israelis.

"Colonel, allow me to atone for my sin with my life. I will do anything to avenge my family, my tribe, my homeland. I will not fail, no matter what the mission."

"I will consider it," said the Colonel, still gazing out the window to hide his smile.

Yusuf Kabyl was ignorant of current events, but not stupid. As he sat shivering in the chilly pre-dawn, in the rental truck two blocks from the White House grounds, he wondered for the thousandth time whether this action was truly the most effective blow he could strike against the Israelis—or was the Colonel just using him to his own best advantage? Yusuf had told the truth about being willing to sacrifice his life for revenge; he had lied about wanting to serve his homeland. The Colonel's *Jihad* was a means to an end; Yusuf's only nation was his tribe.

It seemed to him that the three thousand pounds of explosives in the truck could be put to better use in Tel Aviv than in Washington. Was America so powerful that its enmity would be worse for Israel than a bomb?

Yusuf had grasped the subtle plan immediately. He was, after all, descended from some of the fiercest fighters and sharpest tactical minds in history. The explosives were for show. He was to drive through the delivery gate when it opened at six, submit to a search, allow himself to be captured (after a convincing attempt at resistance), and tell them just before he died that he was working for the Israelis, who hoped to blame the bombing on the Arabs and provoke anti-Arab sentiment.

He would die because they would use a truth serum to make him talk. They wouldn't know he had a chemical in his system that would react with scopolamine or sodium pentothol to send his blood pressure into orbit. He would have maybe a couple of minutes to tell his story before he died. They would think they had overdosed him, or that he'd been predisposed to a stroke, but they'd believe he had been telling the truth. He had learned just enough English and Hebrew to carry out the plot, and had been trained to mimic the hypnotic symptoms produced by the truth serum.

The ludicrous part of the operation was that this was the

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second day he had tried to execute it. Yesterday, they had let him in without a search. He had driven to the loading dock and, because there was nothing else to do, had turned around and driven out. Things would be different today. His control had phoned in an anonymous warning yesterday afternoon.

Yusuf did not trust the Colonel. Living all his life as a nomad, Yusuf was not current with international affairs, but he knew his own position. He was of the *imazighan*, the "free men," "those who carry their cities with them." The Colonel was determined to break up the tribes, for the sake of his own political ambitions. Others had been equally determined before him; the established powers had been underestimating the *imazighan* for at least three thousand years, since the early Egyptians tried to conquer them and ended up with a Berber pharaoh. The "free men" had, since then, survived the armies of Hannibal, Scipio Africanus, Gaiseric, Belisarius, Khair-ad-Din, Napoleon, Graziani, and Rommel, and still lived pretty much as the ancient Egyptian tomb paintings represented them. Insignificant though they appeared, the desert tribes had shaped the culture of the world. They had given sanctuary to the Jews fighting Rome, had reshaped Islam to accommodate their folk religions, and had ruled much of the Christian world for seven hundred years. They would still be there, and still be free, when the present fathead and his little green book were nothing more than an historical footnote.

There was a will that the stingy desert bred in men. People raised in softer circumstances could never understand it. Yusuf would not break. He only hoped the Colonel was not throwing him away cheaply.

There would be two bad points. First, he had to put up enough resistance to being arrested to be taken for a genuine suicide bomber, at the same time managing to be subdued without getting killed. Next, he had to pretend to break down at just the right time, long enough after being injected for the drug to have taken effect, but not so long that he died before implicating the Israelis. It would be a near thing.

The chemical reagent was nauseating him.

At six sharp, the gate opened and Yusuf murmured, at last, *shahadah* and drove to the checkpoint, a tollbar just inside the gate. This time the guards did not raise the barrier but looked at a clipboard.

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"What are you carrying?" one guard asked.

"I. . . no understand."

"Get out of the truck, please."

It went very smoothly, much more smoothly than Yusuf had thought it would. Getting out of the truck, he exposed the pistol in his belt. The guards wrestled him to the ground and, within an hour, lying strapped to a table in the basement of an unmarked building near the White House, Yusuf felt the needle, felt the darkness closing in, and managed to blurt out his disinformation with his last conscious breath.

A week later, Mamluk reported to the Colonel in the same office of the palace in which he'd received Yusuf. The Colonel looked up from his desk with the same detached, painful frown.

"We have found out something about the *provocateur*, the Tuareg," Mamluk said.

"Yes?"

"He's still alive."

"How could that be?" said the Colonel. "I told you to find me an unbreakable man."

"He did not break, Colonel. He carried out the mission. But the Americans did not use the drugs we thought they would. They used another drug, and it did not kill him."

The Colonel sighed heavily and felt his chin. Such were the trials of the Mahdi. One could not expect it to be easy. "Very well, Mamluk," he said. "We must write off the operation. It was my idea. I am at fault."

"Colonel. . . there is one more thing."

"Well?"

"Colonel, they turned him. They let him talk to defectors. He knows who really killed his family. . . ." Mamluk paused, but the Colonel had assumed a familiar, faraway look. Mamluk waited for him to ask questions. Instead, the Colonel rubbed his forehead, picked up a pen, and began making notations on a manuscript. The "green book" was to have yet another volume of wisdom.

"Am I dismissed, Colonel?" Mamluk said.

"Yes," said the Colonel, not pausing in his writing. But when Mamluk was gone, the Colonel sat thoughtfully, then went to the window and drew the curtains tight. ■

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Illustration by Adragna

by Charles Naccarato

The method we used to determine which of us would reveal the details of the *Bronx Project* to the President struck me as rather crude and primitive. There we were, the three highest ranking officers of the CIA below the director, drawing milk shake straws to see who the unlucky messenger would be.

I remember watching Lem Garner manipulating the straws beneath the commissary table. His upper right arm twitched as he made one of the straws

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usually happened to the person who delivered the Bronx Project to the President—he was forced to retire. No one knew exactly why this happened, but the traditional theory among the officers who knew about the Bronx Project was that it was something akin to the ancients killing the bearer of bad tidings. There was only one exception to this dire pattern. For some reason, the man who told President Carter about the Project stayed on with the Agency. All the other officers from 1960 on had been drummed out of the service.

Garner brought the straws above the table, holding them tightly in his right fist. Allan Dickerson, the other officer at the table, tried to lift his coffee cup. When he noticed his hand shaking, he returned the cup to the saucer.

"You go first, Riggins," Dickerson said to me. "After all, you've got more seniority than I do."

"In that case, shouldn't the low man go first?" I asked him.

"Riggins is right," Garner said. "I'm the oldest, so I get to hold the straws. Riggins gets a bye because he's next oldest. It's it over with."

Dickerson pulled a long straw from Garner's fist. He leaned back in his chair, then tossed the straw on the table.

Garner held the straws out to me. "Now you, Terry," he said.

"We've got the most sophisticated computer system in the world and my fate hinges on picking a damn straw," I said.

"Quit dallying, Riggins. Draw!" Garner said.

I chose the straw on the left for no reason other than I was left-handed. It was the wrong principle on which to act. I drew the short one.

"Tough luck, old boy," Garner said, getting up from the table.

"Yeah, tough," Dickerson said.

"You can pick up the complete Bronx file in my office, then make the two o'clock meeting with the President," Garner told me.

The two men left me sitting alone at the table.

I spent a good part of the two hours before I was to meet with President Wellmax feeling sorry for myself. Of course, had I won the draw, everything would have seemed right and fair. But how had this silly way of choosing

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the messenger become a tradition in the Agency? Why was the director always exempt from it? Why were there always three active officers let in on all the details of the secret? Why was it *their* responsibility? I guessed there was some contorted bureaucratic logic to it all. I envied Garner's good fortune. He'd made it through three draws. Twelve years. Three presidents. I wondered how many draws young Dickerson would survive.

I tried to avoid thinking about what I would do if I was forced to retire, not wanting to get too overwrought before the meeting. I did think about the officer who had salvaged his job, following his meeting with Carter. I wished I knew who he was so I could contact him and ask how he'd pulled it off. What card did he hold? Did he threaten Carter with going public and cashing in on all the publicity? Impossible. That would break his oath of loyalty to the Project and would also risk activating the "expunge clause" of his contract with the CIA. All of us were tested and retested for our loyalty to the Bronx Project, but the threat of having one's self and one's entire family expunged in some brutal fashion was an added incentive for keeping quiet about the operation. So how did he do it? Was it simply a matter of Carter's being a former nuclear technician? Did that somehow make him more understanding?

Wellmax was the tallest man ever elected president. He was six-seven and had been a professional football player before becoming a lawyer, then pursuing a political career as a liberal Democrat from Wisconsin. As a U.S. Senator, he became a national entity by chairing a committee on corruption in amateur and professional athletics. The party and the people were impressed with his performance during the hearing and he easily won his bid for the presidency. He had a gentle and thoughtful air about him that contrasted with his violent reputation as a defensive lineman. The people seemed to admire a man who could be understanding and intelligent and yet be capable of unleashing a certain kind of brutality if the circumstances required violence.

When I walked into the Oval Office, President Wellmax was opening and closing the empty drawers of his huge desk.

"Come in, Mr. Riggins," he said, without looking up. He opened and closed another drawer. "I understand you're to brief me on some intelligence matters. All these briefings are beginning to make my head swim a bit." He looked up at me and smiled. "Reminds me a little of being a rookie in training camp. So take it easy on me. I'm

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only a former jock, you know."

He shook my hand and told me to have a seat. His casual self-mockery put me more at ease and it was then that I decided to adopt a relaxed approach to my presentation.

"Did you make it to any of the inaugural parties last night?" he asked me.

"No sir, I didn't."

"Too bad. I had a good time at the main ball, but I'm worried about the political fallout from the toast I gave. I was the first president ever to make a toast with beer. Milwaukee beer, I might add." He seemed proud of what he had done.

"You can expect a letter from the Daughters of the American Revolution," I said.

"With intelligence information like that, Mr. Riggins, I can see I'm going to be okay here in the Oval Office. But I'm sure you have more important things to tell me. I have a note from the Director of the CIA that you're to tell me about this Bronx Project. It must be hot stuff. I was advised to give you as much time as you needed."

"It's really up to you, sir. It depends on how much you want to know."

"I'm a man who wants to know as much as he can, Mr. Riggins. So how do you want to do this? Do you have a presentation to make first? Or do you want to have a dialogue. *My* preference is the dialogue. I like the give and take."

"Very well, sir."

"So tell me. What is this Bronx Project?"

"It concerns our nuclear capability, sir."

"What about it?" he asked.

"We don't have any nuclear capability, sir."

"Is this some sort of joke?"

"No joke, sir."

He paused and looked hard at me. Then he smiled and said, "I know. This is just a little hazing from the intelligence community. Right? Pull the President's leg on his first day on the job."

"I don't think anyone would want to pull your leg, Mr. President. I'm telling you the truth."

"Go on." He still seemed suspicious, as if I was still leading him on.

"I'll give you some background, sir."

"No, wait . . . let me ask you a question, first. When did we lose our capability?"

"We haven't had it since 1958, the year the Bronx Project went into effect."

"How gullible do you people think I am?" he said indignantly.

"It's not a question of gullibility, sir."

"Well, let's have this background then."

"Mr. President," I said, "I can see by your reaction that you don't believe me. Sir, I assure you that what I'm about to tell you is the truth."

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"Let me just say that if this is some sort of prank, Mr. Riggins, it'll be your ass."

"I'm afraid it'll be my butt one way or the other, sir."

"I suppose you're going to tell me we didn't actually drop nuclear weapons on the Japanese in 1945," Wellmax said.

"We did indeed, sir. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were nuclear events. But they were the first and last ones to take any lives."

"A fact that the world is well aware of," he pointed out.

"I'm not sure how much you've studied the history of the nuclear age, sir, but if you dig beneath the superficial reports and chronicles of the post World War II era, you will see that there has been a great deal of hysteria about atomic weaponry."

"Unfounded hysteria?"

"In a sense. Particularly on the part of Americans. Once the Soviets said they had a nuclear arsenal of their own, Americans got frightened. The Red Scare. Bomb shelters. Increased civil defense measures. But the thing they didn't know was how ineffective the Soviet's delivery system was. In fact, our system wasn't much better. Yet everyone had this vision of the world being totally destroyed. The final hour and all. There might have been terrible damage done to both countries if a war had broken out, but it wouldn't have been the end of the world by any means. There just weren't that many devices available on either side, despite the propaganda."

"We were just scaring each other over nothing?"

"Not quite nothing, sir. But the fear was certainly out of line with the reality. Of course, this information was never released to the public in either country. The fear of total destruction was a way of avoiding certain kinds of conflicts."

"But we *did* have conflicts with the Soviets in the forties and fifties," the President said. "The Berlin Blockade, Korea, Hungary."

"Yes. And not one of them led to the use of nuclear weapons. Right?"

"Right. But the threat was there," he said firmly.

"Yes. Eisenhower used the threat to bring an end to the Korean conflict—and it wasn't a bluff on his part. He could have used the sort of device we used on the Japanese. So the Soviets and Chinese advised their surrogates in Korea to back off. *Status quo ante.*"

"But wasn't it the nuclear threat that kept the Soviets out of Western Europe?"

"No. They knew we would never use atomic weapons on or near Europe. No matter what you might have read, the Soviets had neither the will nor the wherewithal to fight us in Europe. But we're still talking about events prior to 1958—before the Bronx Project."

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"Yes. Tell me about that."

"Following the death and destruction caused by the two bombs set off in Japan, in 1945, Albert Einstein set to work on a scheme to counteract the forces he and other physicists had unleashed by their nuclear research. During the war, he did not want Hitler to get the bomb first, but once Hitler was defeated, Einstein didn't want anyone to have that awesome power. For the next nine years, he worked on a way to avoid a nuclear holocaust. Six months before his death in 1955, he asked for a special meeting with President Eisenhower.

"Ike went to Einstein's home and it was then and there that the physicist explained his plan. He told the President that, as with any scientific discovery, there were positive and negative applications of the new knowledge. He was well aware of the possible peaceful uses of nuclear technology. He was even convinced that the threat of total destruction was a positive function of the bomb. But, he believed, the actual *use* of these weapons was madness."

Wellmax interrupted me then. "Get to the point, Riggins. What was his scheme?"

"Many people believe Einstein was a man who had little interest in the political nature of man. This wasn't true. His scheme was both a political and scientific solution to the problem. As with all of his scientific work, Einstein's new plan was complex yet beautifully simple. He had discovered a substance he called *alethium* that could defuse any nuclear device. All one need do was place a very small amount of alethium near a nuclear weapon and it simply would not work. The chain reaction would not occur. Please don't ask me about the physics involved, sir. I still don't understand why a clock on a speeding train moves slower than one at the station. Or is it the other way around?"

"Go on, Riggins."

"I'm sorry, sir. You see, Einstein understood that now that the genie was out of the bottle, so to speak, the scientific community, not to mention the politicians of the world, would keep making larger and more dangerous weapons. The thrust of his idea was to allow them to continue to do so but to defuse each device they developed. He also devised some ways in which this operation might be accomplished."

"Pardon me, Mr. Riggins. Are you telling me that Albert Einstein trusted a former general, and a politician to boot, with this information?"

"Surprisingly so. We don't know why he did, but you'll see he was right. Keep in mind that it was Ike who initiated the Bronx Project. And remember, too, Ike's critical remarks about the military-industrial complex before

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he left office. I'll admit it's strange behavior for a man with Eisenhower's background. Somewhere along the line, he must have had a change of heart. You might expect it from a liberal . . . well, I mean . . ."

"No offense taken, Mr. Riggins. Now, you said this meeting between Einstein and Eisenhower took place in '55, but the Project wasn't put into effect until '58."

"Right. Einstein died in '55. Ike sat on the idea for a while, then approached John Foster Dulles with it. Dulles put the CIA to work on its feasibility. But let me get back to some of the more brilliant aspects of Einstein's theory here. He had developed an ingenious way to slow the progress of nuclear weapons research. He reversed the concept of the Manhattan Project. This was his way of handling the bureaucratic nature of scientific progress."

"If I remember correctly," Wellmax said, "the Manhattan Project was organized on the basis of dividing the work into isolated parts. Scientists and technicians working on certain areas of the Project without any knowledge of the complete picture. So no one could break security and run off with the whole plan."

"Exactly," I said. "But you see, the Manhattan Project had a distinct goal to accomplish. Einstein's idea was to maintain the divided bureaucratic arrangement but to keep changing the goals, thus creating a certain built-in failure factor. Confusion. Abortive testing. The sorts of things we experience all the time now. He wanted to make the bureaucracy so complicated it just wouldn't function very well. He calculated this would hold down the number of significant developments brought to completion. He knew the scientists would continue to come up with new ideas—there was no way to actually stop this—but with proper control of the bureaucracy, you could slow down the pace of construction. This would give the people in the Bronx Project enough time to ensure that every system developed had its necessary allotment of alethium.

"Every warhead produced in the United States has to be inspected by a team from this special section of the CIA. The scientists never question it. You have to consider that they've been co-opted by the system, so they don't ask too many questions about security. It's during these routine inspections that the alethium is implanted."

"Jesus! This is the most incredible thing I've ever heard," President Wellmax said, with a slight grin. "And I'm not so sure

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SPY TALK: *Tea and Biscuit Company* - slang for the C.I.A.

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you're still not pulling my chain. But I'll play along with you for a while. Do you mean to tell me that if the Soviets launch an attack and I press the button, our weapons won't work?"

"I don't think you have to worry about Premier Evanovich launching any missiles, sir. His don't work, either."

At this point, Wellmax laughed and started shaking his head. "I've got to hand it to whoever thought up this gag. . . Einstein. . . Eisenhower. . . go on, go on."

"All the missiles will take off and the warheads will drop from the bombers, but there won't be any nuclear explosions. They're all duds. On both sides. But all our conventional weapons are fully operational. That's obvious."

"I'm fascinated with what exactly happened in '58, Mr. Riggins. Tell me about that."

"I hope I'm not confusing you, sir."

"I'm a lawyer, Mr. Riggins. I'm used to convolution."

"In 1958, Ike and Dulles were convinced that it was time to put Einstein's theory into practice. The Soviets had just launched Sputnik and scared the daylights out of the American people. But we had a card, too. Our nuclear development was proceeding rapidly, and the Soviets knew it. We had three times the number of their warheads. It was clear to these men, something had to be done about the arms race—and it had to be done quickly.

"At Dulles' request, the CIA contacted the KGB and told them about Einstein's plan. It was a gamble, to be sure, but if the Soviets didn't bite, the U.S. could just forget that alethium ever existed. Khrushchev and the KGB were *very* interested. One thing Mr. K. did not want, despite all his bluster and shoe-thumping, was the annihilation of the Soviet people."

"Hold on a minute;" the President put up his hand. "You mean the KGB, the most sinister intelligence service in history, was interested in this project?"

"Yes, sir, I do. You know, even the CIA has a rather tainted image in this country. But that's fine. Let people think the worst; that's what they're supposed to think. What better cover for us? No one would ever suspect *us* of secretly saving the world from nuclear destruction. Honestly, now, would you have ever suspected it, Mr. President?"

"No."

I continued. "The representatives of both governments met secretly in a Bronx safe-house, in August of 1958, and drew up the Bronx Agreement. Ike and Khrushchev met for four hours; the rest of the details of the agreement were left to the CIA and the KGB. I have here a copy of the short version of the agreement signed by Ike and Khrushchev."

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I pulled the document from the file folder and handed it to the President. He read it, then put it down on his desk blotter.

"Do you mind if I ask you what some of these details are?"

"Not at all. The agencies had to devise a verification mechanism. We accomplish this by the exchange of high-ranking officers who monitor one another's procedures. I did a tour in Moscow just three years ago and I can assure you the verification process is working smoothly."

"What about the Chinese and the other nuclear nations?" he asked.

"All penetrated by either us or the KGB. These nations don't have the slightest suspicion of what's going on. And we've infiltrated every terrorist group with the slightest inclination toward fooling around with nuclear devices. Mr. President, you said the KGB was sinister. . . you can imagine what the CIA and KGB can accomplish together."

"I can't imagine how this could possibly have been kept a secret for all these years."

"There are extreme measures for the slightest lapse in security." I paused for a second and thought of my own predicament, then continued. "The Bronx concept works at all levels of the operation, which reduces the number of people who know about the whole plan. For example, the people implanting the alethium in the warheads, by and large, do not know they're actually defusing the weapon. Most of them think they're adding a more dangerous element to the bomb. The more confusion, cross-allegiances, and contradictory motivations, the better."

Seeing the document must have convinced Wellmax of the truth of what I was telling him. He pondered longer over the other details I described to him, but he kept returning to the seeming impossibility of keeping such an operation a secret.

At one point in our dialogue, I found an apt historical analogy. "Mr. President, think of the Ultra secret in World War II. The fact was that the Allies had access to the German secret code for

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nearly the entire war. Not only was it a well-kept secret during the war, it was kept from the public for nearly forty years."

"Yes, I see," he said thoughtfully. "But what about the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962? Wasn't the world on the brink?"

"Not quite. It was a bit of a show for the people. Kennedy was irritated about losing Cuba and the failure of the Bay of Pigs Invasion. He needed something to rebuild his image. Krushchev obliged as long as Castro was left in power. There's one thing you must understand, Mr. President. Everyone, with the exception of those in on the Bronx Project, was scared to death. The generals didn't know it was a show. Nor did the Congress and the diplomats. All in the dark."

"Has any president ever tried to change the policy? Secretly, to get an edge on the Soviets."

"Why should he, Mr. President? This arrangement might save the world."

"Yes. But do you realize what this does to most of our recent history?"

"Not any more than what the Ultra secret did to the history of World War II. For thirty-five years, historians were writing about that war without knowing all the facts. I'd say it's an occupational hazard of writing history. You never have *all* the facts."

"Why—if there is no real threat of nuclear war—are we always engaged in arms limitation and reduction talks? Why are we spending all this money to develop more and more weapons that don't work? If we can agree on the Bronx Project, why don't we just agree to stop building the damn things entirely?"

"The people don't really want it, and it would have a negative effect on the concept of the nation-state. Twenty per cent of our people are engaged in defense-related work. Almost forty per cent of the Soviet people are similarly employed. We must keep them working. And our studies show that if we, the Western democracies, were to lose the threat of war, we would face an incredible decline in national purpose.

"I'd like to caution you here, Mr. President. There's a tendency to forget that although the nuclear weapons are defused, we still face a conventional threat from the Soviet Bloc. If you look closely at the Bronx Agreement, you'll see that the ideological and military competition between us and the Soviets is not eliminated completely. The struggle goes on. But we've put on gloves to save us from harming each other mortally."

Wellmax picked up the copy of the Bronx Agreement and looked at it for a few seconds. I could tell he wasn't actually reading it.

"If this scenario is true . . ."

"I assure you it's true, sir."

He gave me a stern look, then

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said, "*If* this business is true, I suppose I'll have to rethink my whole posture on the defense of the nation. Then there are the constitutional implications of all this to consider. Eisenhower and the CIA blatantly abrogated the constitutional process with this document. I'll have to give this problem much deeper thought."

"All the presidents before you, sir, have done the same. It's understandable. And they've all concluded that without the Bronx Project, there might not be a Constitution to abrogate. I suspect they've seen the Project as a worthy extension of executive action."

"But each of them, as Commander in Chief, had the authority to discontinue the Project. Am I not correct, Mr. Riggins?" The President said this with an undercurrent of anger that made me pity the men who had tried to carry a football past him on the playing field.

"Yes, sir. It's certainly within your power to nix the Project, but only a . . ."

"Only a what, Riggins?" He looked as if he were about to deliver a spine-snapping tackle.

"Your predecessors, sir, have been trapped, if you'll permit the word, by their sense of humanity. What person would want to tell the world that for the sake of a principle, he had eliminated the safeguard against the destruction of the earth? Can you imagine yourself going on television and telling the people that all their fears *were* unjustified but now *are* justified because you had decided the constitutional nuances outweighed the need to preserve the planet?"

Wellmax snorted, then said, "I'll tell you what, Riggins. I'm beginning not to like this shit very much. I don't like being clipped by you cloak-and-dagger guys. You're putting me in a goddamned box, and I've *never* liked getting it from the blind side. Never. And I'll tell you another thing: I've been known to take off the head of the sucker who's closest to me when it happens.

"Get out of my sight, Riggins," he said. "I'll keep this agreement for the time being and discuss it further with the Director."

I knew it was over for me, then. I wanted to tell him to consider the penalties for tampering with the Bronx Project, but I decided I didn't need a couple of broken arms to go along with my pink slip.

My forced retirement wasn't as costly as I had envisioned. The Bronx Division supplemented my pension secretly, so I was now making more money than when I was an active officer. The Division probably thought it was an added inducement for me to abide by my oath to the Project, as if the "expunge clause" wasn't enough. But neither of these inducements were necessary in my

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case. I would never have betrayed the Project, even if I had been left destitute. It was just too important to the world. But I did miss the excitement and pressure of my job. I wasn't having much luck finding something to occupy my free time.

Two months after my meeting with the President, I was coming from an unsuccessful visit to an employment agency when I bumped into Allan Dickerson on the sidewalk. He offered to buy me a drink, so we stepped into a nearby lounge.

Over the first drink, Dickerson showed polite concern about what he thought was my poor financial condition. I purposely didn't tell him about the supplemental payments I was receiving. He was relatively young. Let him sweat it out, I thought. He asked about my family and my prospects for finding another job.

Then he said, "Riggins, I'm thinking of buying a truckload of rabbits' feet to help me get through the next draw. I'd really hate getting bounced out of the Agency."

"Hell," I replied, "that's at least four years away. And who knows? Maybe Wellmax will get re-elected."

"You can bet *I'll* be voting for him." He ordered two more drinks.

"Speaking of Wellmax," I said. "I'm curious. Which option did he finally choose?"

"Our profile on him was a bit off. We figured, as a liberal, he'd just go along with it all. But he raised all kinds of hell with the Director. Christ, he almost fired him, too. He went on and on about being impotent in the face of a possible Soviet attack. I'm afraid he doesn't have much faith in our usual verification methods."

"I haven't heard him making any speeches about it, though," I said.

"Oh, you won't, either. He chose the secret removal option. Garner's in charge of it. Yeah, he told Garner he wanted the Agency to start secretly removing the alethium from the warheads. Garner's doing a great job of nodding his head and doing absolutely nothing. But I suppose it's a bitch of a job to appear busy; you know, faking all those reports and shit. But Wellmax feels better, now. I guess he's feeling a little more potent these days." Dickerson chuckled. "The KGB officers are getting a good laugh out of it, too. But in a more serious vein, Riggins, it's a damn shame you had to be sacrificed. At your age, it must be awfully hard for you and your family."

"It's going to be rough for a while," I said, looking at the red-white-and-blue beer sign flashing behind the bartender. "But I think the Project's worth one man's discomfort. We'll be all right. We'll survive." ■

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ON FILE.....

by Richard Walton

Luckless Lydia

The tall green-eyed redhead, poised elegantly on a stool in the cocktail lounge of Prague's Moscou Hotel, sipped sparingly at her vodkatini. The lush mink coat draped over the fat shoulders of the Western diplomat's wife sitting beside her was near enough to touch, and she did just that, for the hell of it, covertly caressing the fur between finger and thumb. It felt good and she frowned then, glancing down at her own artificial fur.

Being new to the spy game, at the tender age of eighteen, Lydia Ungrova had to settle for whatever lay on the prop wardrobe hooks.

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She could have had the finest furs from the Arctic, but that would have meant visiting STB Headquarters in Bartolomejska Street . . . knocking on the green door . . . being nice to the pervert in pebble-glasses, whose hairy paws crawled over quivering flesh like a spider while his mouth drooled spittle at the corner. The boss himself. Lydia shuddered, taking another sip of her drink.

Not so long before, just five years ago, in fact, as a pretty schoolgirl, she'd flung her arms round the first Russian liberator in the city streets. An hour later, she lay torn and bloody in the gutter after six of them had sodomised and raped her.

Her father, a staunch Communist, dared to protest. He was beaten up and expelled from the Party. It was old Drooly, himself, from the Ministry, who found her soon afterwards, queueing up for food.

The deal was simple for a starving, pretty girl to understand.

She had a natural flair for languages and, under the guise of working for the Ministry of Agriculture, was soon proficient in English, German and French. And she was given that most coveted treasure in post-war Prague, a card to pick up nylons and Paris fashions at the "Party only" luxury store in Krakovska Street. All she had to do in return, as *Agent L77* of the Secret Police, was seduce visiting diplomats and businessmen for State, Service and industrial secrets.

Helped by barmen and waiters in the pay of the STB, she worked the bars of hotels—like the International, the Moscou and the Praha—taking the victims back to her flat in Kovitska Street, where a hidden movie camera in the chandelier was triggered by a pressure-plate under her mattress, and a photo-electric beam, broken by the opening door, activated a tape-recorder wired directly into STB Headquarters.

She was waiting that night in the Moscou lounge for her first score, the husband of that mink-swathed harridan. He had told the barman he liked young flesh and, once the dragon was in bed, lost to the world under a mud pack, he would be down looking for it.

By midnight, the pressure-plate under Lydia's mattress had launched her into spydom as the drunken diplomat described a new rocket warhead there on the test-bed.

Soon she was a rising star in the STB and, after a couple of years, was allowed the rare privilege of going abroad, but only to spy on her own people in a theatrical group touring other Communist countries. She told her masters later that East Germany was backward and decadent, Hungary loathed Communism, Russia was devoid of humour and good manners, but Poland was a paradise

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with plenty of freedom. The report was filed away, but Drooly in the green room put the blue star of "Caution" on it, with the comment: "Watch her! This one has a mind of her own."

When not sipping vodkatinis in cocktail bars or at embassy parties, she was happy to do "field" work.

When Jews became persecuted again, she pulled off a particularly treacherous coup. Posing as a Jewish girl in trouble, she was introduced to Karel Rodan, an Israeli agent posing as a Dutch businessman. After he had sported around with her for an hour or two, on that highly-sprung mattress, offering to help her in exchange for the exercise, the STB knew how and where to catch him.

He left Lydia's flat at 4:00 a.m. Like a dutiful mistress, she'd gotten out of bed to make coffee—though phoned the STB as he went out the door. Rodan, arriving at the Austrian border that night to cross with four hundred runaway Jews, found the STB and not Lydia waiting.

Italian diplomat Serge Massoni was carrying Naval plans in his briefcase when Lydia zeroed in on him in the International Hotel. He had told a waiter how he would get the redhead at the bar drunk and, in greater detail, what would follow. The waiter, who knew Lydia's track-record, merely nodded and made the introduction.

She had taken a benzedrine wide-awake pill and it was Massoni who slipped into the arms of Bacchus, then Morpheus, not she. She lingered briefly, to pose alongside him in simulated sex for the camera, then sped off to the STB with his briefcase to photocopy the contents. Massoni left with a leer next morning, after she convinced him he had scored during the long night, but a month later he got the blackmail photos.

There had been a bonus in his briefcase: a list of sympathetic Catholic priests inside Czechoslovakia, and thirty of them were arrested.

Somewhere along the line, the inevitable happened; Lydia fell in love with a victim, a South American diplomat, having a daughter called Lilinka by him. He urged her to defect and warned her what her life-style was doing to her, the finale probably being a transfer to a Siberian salt-mine as a sex-slave.

She wanted to quit, but could not, and found herself transferred to a new boss in the STB, a sadistic major called Vaclac Rassart, who forced her to procure young girls for him to drug and seduce. Perhaps she saw in this a possible fate for her own young daughter, one day; it was time to get out, while she was ahead. But that was the problem: How to get Lilinka out, too?

No one knows why she made the next decision—leaving the child with friends in the country, hoping perhaps that, later, right-

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wing underground workers would smuggle the child to freedom.

She had a friend, Gregori Zelenka, a wartime pilot in the RAF, who wanted to defect, too. So he stole a Czech fighter plane and took Lydia as passenger, but six miles inside the border they ran out of fuel and crashed. The dying Zelenka's last act was to pin on his wartime medals, after dragging the injured Lydia from the blazing wreck. Within a few hours, she was back in the STB, telling them that Zelenka had taken her hostage. There was no way to disprove the lie and they released her, but from then on she was a marked woman . . . on Drooly's death-list. Whatever his colleagues thought, he didn't buy the story.

Thinking it would enhance her chances with the West, Lydia then began double-crossing her own people, handing over to Allied agents in Prague lists of Czech agents in the West and giving them blueprints of the Clemouc and Zivorost atomic research plants.

And she helped Bruce Woodland, an American agent in Prague, escape when the STB were closing the net on him. He begged her to cross the frontier with him but she was worried about Lilinka and stayed, but she begged him as he trudged off through the snow: "In God's name, help me one day, and save my child, too!"

But, time had run out . . .

On the morning of January 14, 1962, Woodland received a phone call in London telling him that Lydia was dead and that he was to meet a contact he knew, called X, in Vienna. He was leery about that, because the city is only a few miles from the Czech border, but he went because he owed his freedom—and his life—to Lydia.

X met him in the Carlton Hotel and told him to be on the next plane back to London; Lydia's diary would be delivered to him before take-off.

It was, wrapped in a newspaper, as the engines were warming up. And it was a prize find for Western espionage chiefs, listing Czech agents in many countries. A remarkably simple but effective numbers and letter code, it was based on two Russian Communist Party textbooks. For example, 2-614-8-5 would mean Volume 2, page 614, line 8, word 5, and so it went on.

But there was one vital missing entry which Lydia had started to write: "Lilinka is . . ." And the line stopped there.

How had Lydia died? According to official sources, she had gassed herself in the luxury flat. But X did not believe it, and neither did Woodland. With freedom in the West almost within reach, she had everything to live for.

Today, Lilinka would be a grown woman. Is she dead or living under an assumed name in the West or, like her mother, a luckless pawn in the clutches of the STB? Maybe someone should ring their number and ask. It used to be 343434 . . . ■

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WORD SEARCHING

Using the letters in the word, SECURITY, see how many five and six letter words you can find, i.e., curse.

NAME THAT SPY!

Using a simple letter/numeral code, decipher the following to learn the code name of General Charles de Gaulle's intelligence chief during WWII.

29 - 25 - 26 - 25 - 15 - 18 - 26 4 - 9 - 3 - 3 - 1

AUTHOR SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the following six words, then unscramble the underscored letters, to learn the name of a famous espionage author:

H A Y E M M

R I E R M O R T S

T I L F T E R A I N

L O E M

C E A S H

C R O D D E E

— — — — — — — —

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SCRAMBLED NAMES

Unscramble the names of these villains from a series of spy novels. After arranging them on the right, you will find the name of the spy in a line of first letters.

1. Spajrangck _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
2. Monirtank _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
3. Gimsterbi _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
4. Germillioo _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
5. Nascamarang _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
6. Storeldelfbn _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
7. Faroilgercungi _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
8. Slonjiuu _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _
9. Guxardoh _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

SOLUTION: WORD SEARCHING

Our "experts" came up with 18 words we consider legitimate:

Cruise	Truce	Surety
Trice	Curtsy	Cruet
Crust	Curie	Rusty
Curse	Crusty	Sucre
Crest	Suite	Rites
Cries	Tries	Scrit

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SOLUTION: NAME THAT SPY!

Colonel Passy

A = 9 B = 19 C = 29 D = 8 E = 18 F = 28 G = 7 H = 17
I = 27 J = 6 K = 16 L = 26 M = 5 N = 15 O = 25 P = 4
QU = 14 R = 24 S = 3 T = 13 U = 23 V = 2 W = 12
X = 22 Y = 1 Z = 11

SOLUTION TO: AUTHOR SCRAMBLE:

MAYHEM
TERRORISM
INFILTRATE
MOLE
CHASE
DECODER

ADAM HALL

SOLUTION TO: SCRAMBLED NAMES

1.	Jack Sprang	Diamonds Are Forever
2.	Anton Murik	License Renewed
3.	Mister Big	Live and Let Die
4.	Emilio Largo	Thunderball
5.	Scaramanga	The Man With the Golden Gun
6.	Ernst Blofeld	You Only Live Twice
7.	Auric Goldfinger	Goldfinger
8.	Julius No	Dr. No
9.	Hugo Drax	Moonraker

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_____ Captialized word at 40¢ per word _____
Total amount for 1 ad $ _____
15% Savings with 3 Consecutive Issues
(a) Multiply one ad total $ _____ x3= $ _____
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(c) Total amount for 3 ads $ _____
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